

Sufficient REASONS ³
FOR A
RELIGIOUS, CONSCIENTIOUS, and PEACEABLE
SEPARATION
FROM THE

Communion of the Church of *England*:

OR,

A REPLY to a Tract, intituled, *The Protestant Dissenter guided to the Church of England; or, no sufficient Reasons to renounce the Communion of that Church, but weighty Reasons, and indispensible Obligations to embrace it.*

In TWO PARTS.

In the FIRST PART the Dissenters in general are vindicated from the Charge of Schism. And in the SECOND PART (to which is added an Appendix, containing an answer to *The Evidence of Infant-baptism, &c.*) the Baptists in particular are vindicated from the said Charge.

By JOHN TASKER.

1 Theff. v. 21. *Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*

Isa. viii. 20. *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. NOON, at the *White Hart*, near *Mercers Chapel* in *Cheapside*.

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P R E F A C E

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

WHEN Mr. *White's* book intituled, *The Protestant Dissenter guided to the church of England*, came to my hands, and I had read a considerable part of it, it was strongly *impress'd* on my mind, that it ought to have an answer; not because of the weight of his argument, but for the manner in which he manages it, in a plausible stile, but treating the Dissenters very unfairly; and because *this*, with other books of the like tendency, were officiously handed about and dispersed among the Dissenters, to draw them away (as it seemed to me) from the belief and practice of the truth as it is in Jesus, and to entangle 'em again in these errors which they had once forsaken; or at least to prejudice the minds of others, and to hold them still in darkness, whose minds are already sufficiently prejudiced by a stiff and self-adherence (without due examination) to their teachers and doctors, (as they call themselves) or to the traditions of their forefathers. For our author himself says, (p. 29. 30.) “ There are some, doubtless too, “ in *our own church*, as well as there are amongst the “ Dissenters, who do the same; worshipping God “ on *that mountain*, BECAUSE *their fathers* before “ them did so. They think it would be a reflection “ upon the memory of their fathers, a sort of con-
“ demnation

“ demnation of them, if they were to renounce that
 “ way of religion wherein they lived and died ; and
 “ so (*loving father and mother more than CHRIST*)
 “ they resolve, at *any rate*, to go on in it.”

This is, I acknowledge, an excellent caution, and contains in it much good counsel, but must leave it to your consideration, *who* has the most need of it, *Churchmen* or *Dissenters*.

It will signify little (that I know of) to tell you, that I have taken abundance of pains in this essay for your good. (One reason was, because I had finished an answer before I saw the dissenting gentleman's answers to Mr. *White's* letters, upon seeing of which I thought it best to do it over again.) But my labour and pains I don't grudge, so that my neighbours, friends, and relations, may be benefited by it. If you receive any benefit by it, give God the glory, for I have no other views in it.

'Tis much larger than I intended, but could not well help it, without an injury to the argument by too slight a reply : and my design was, (by the Lord's Direction) if possible, to instruct and stir up the ignorant and indolent to a due consideration of the things of God and his religion, that is to say, the religion which Christ himself has instituted ; that they might awake out of sleep, shake off their shakels, and bravely judge for themselves in the things of God, that they may search the scriptures with all diligence, and go to God for his direction, (as, blessed be the Lord, his unworthy servant was in his youth enabled to do) and he will lead and guide them. See *Psal.* xxv. *Jer.* vi. 16. *Hos.* vi. 3. 1 *Thess.* v. 21. *Matth.* vii. 7. And this, without doubt, is a matter of great importance, as it tends to your souls eternal welfare.
Farewel.

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'Sufficient

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FOR A
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MR. *White* tells us in his preface, that “ the dissenters have with great industry dispersed through all parts of the nation divers small tracts, *pretending to justify their lay-nonconformity*, or to give *reasons for their dissent*; but, doubtless, really intending to instil their prejudices into the minds of *our people*, and to seduce them from the church.” But,

With a better reason, I think, *they* may conclude, that this his performance was design’d as an artifice to deceive the most ignorant of the Dissenters, and of his own people too. For,

Whereas he says, “ Those letters, (*to the dissenting gentleman*) being chiefly composed for the sake of *gentlemen*, may be supposed to contain, as they indeed do, divers reasonings, which *every* common reader will not enter thoroughly into: — What he found in those writings fit for his present *purpose*, he has thought proper to take into *this*, &c.”

From hence one would think that those were learned letters indeed, and beyond the reach of common readers;

but whoever reads the gentleman's answers to 'em may find, that the argument of 'em is familiar, and fit for the *poor*, to whom the gospel should be preached: and since the gentleman's answers to these letters are a full justification of the Dissenters separation, which the unlearned as well as learned are concern'd in, I can't imagine what the real design and purpose of our author was, or what mov'd him to appear again in this *new method*, unless he would have the world believe that he had fully confuted the gentleman, and with him the Dissenters in general; and yet in this performance has not refuted his arguments, but that they still stand good and firm against him: nor has he pretended to answer to any particular tract, (of which there are many) which shews the reasonableness and necessity of such a separation as the Dissenters maintain.

He was, I believe, pretty well assur'd by the gentleman's third and last letter, that since he would not speak to the *points* which were *essential*, he would have done with the *controversy*; for thus he says*, "You must excuse me from
 " paying *any farther* regard to your lucubrations on these
 " things. I have neither time nor inclination to dispute
 " about a scheme which you affect to wrap in obscurity,
 " and which you are afraid to lay open and avow before
 " the world. I here therefore take my leave of the present
 " debate." No doubt our author was glad to have done with him, seeing he could not answer him, and now from him he turns to those of a lower rank, amongst whom he might think to *grope in the dark* without interruption, and so as well as he could, keep up his credit with the vulgar, using his utmost art, as the *pastor* †, the *proper pastor* of his *good neighbours*, the *Lay-dissenters*, by *good words* and *fair speeches* to *deceive the hearts of the simple*! ‡ and this, he *hopes, will not produce any farther controversy* ||, because the *substance of a very considerable part of it had lain already, some years before the public, in the three letters, &c.* But tho' that gentleman had done with him for very good and weighty reasons, as above, might it not be reasonable to suppose that some one or other would be stirred up from among the body of the injur'd Dissenters, to plead the cause of the *poor and needy*, whose souls are as dear to God and their Saviour as those of the most learned?

Our author says §, "There is a notion mightily prevailing amongst those of *your way*, that every one is as
 " much

* Third letter, 2d edit. p. 94. † Mr. White's pref. p. 7. & 8.
 ‡ Rom. xvi. 18. || Preface. § White's Protestant Dissenter guided, p. 10. 11. 12.

“ much at liberty to be of what church, or party of Christians he pleases, as he is to go to what tavern, or to be of what club he likes best.” For my part I know of no such notion prevailing amongst us, let it be ever so *fit for our purpose*, as he says it is; nor will we willingly be separated from the church of Christ, but do not allow the church from which we separate to be a *sound part* thereof. And as for his saying,

“ Then they have nothing more to do, but to set before you — some motive of interest, faction, or ambition, to gain you over to their own. It is said, that *Mahomet* took this course; persuading the *Arabians*, that men of all religions were equally acceptable to God, if they did but serve him faithfully in them; not doubting but when he had made them indifferent to all religions, he should be able, by the help of his sword, to shew them a *good reason*, why they should come into, and embrace his.” And further, “ Whoever shall go about, under such colours and pretences as these, to entice men into treason, or rebellion, on the one hand, or into schism, on the other, must be a man either so weak, or so wicked, as to be very unfit to have the direction of mens consciences.”

Unworthy reflections these upon the Dissenters and their leaders, who abhor such principles and practices.

We are therefore not concerned with these reflections upon us*, as tho’ we caused *divisions in the church of God*, and were *false prophets, seducers, &c.* for we believe as firmly as our author, “ That men are accountable, and shall be judged, for their wilful transgressions of all the laws and appointments of the gospel; and therefore, doubtless, all *their presumptuous invasions and violations* of the constitution, discipline, and order of God’s holy church ”

But where are his proofs, either that he himself is as he would be thought, a true and *rightful pastor* to the Dissenters, or that others who bear the name of the *clergy* are so, when as the Dissenters cannot own them *in that character*, but have pastors of their own choosing, more agreeable to the mind of God, as they think, and which might be largely shewn, both out of the gentleman’s letters, and otherwise also. They own, ’tis their duty to submit to *those* who have the *rule over* them, agreeable to God’s word, and no otherwise.

We allow also, that the “ *fearing God, and working righteousness, takes in* † *walking in all the ways of God’s* ”

B 2

“ *holy* ”

* *White’s Prot. Dissenter guided*, p. 15. † *Ibid.* p. 16.

“ *holy laws, and all the works of his commandments.*” But that it by no means follows from thence, that the *Dissenters* do therefore *break one of his first and great commandments, by causing divisions and offences in the church.*

But he goes on and says, “ If your * separations are a natural and unavoidable occasion of many mischiefs, if they dishonour our holy religion, if they scandalize *Jews* and all others who are either enemies or strangers to it, if they are daily seen to be the sport and diversion of infidels, to harden Papists in their errors, and to strengthen their prejudices against the religion of Protestants, to unsettle the weak, and to grieve the minds of good men, and to occasion in many instances, the loss of truth, and peace, and the utter extinction of charity amongst us; if these (I say) are the effects and consequences of your separations, then *common sense* will tell us, they are not lightly and wantonly to be ventured upon; and that nothing less than some great and weighty reason *indeed* will be a sufficient justification of them.”

Here is a great heap of mischiefs raked up, but on whose head they must light, that is still the question. The *Dissenters*, who make the word of God their rule, say, and believe they are followers of Christ in it, and they don’t do it *lightly and wantonly*, but upon weighty reasons: but if he is here speaking to *rakes and libertines*, or men of no religion, who, let ’em go where they will, are an honour to none, what is all this to the *religious Dissenters*? and why should he tell us of those who *in conversation have plainly confess’d*, that they have little or no reason for their separation? Does he think therefore he shall find this to be the case of all the *Dissenters*, that because some have nothing to say for it, none among ’em have? No, he knows the contrary, and has had enough of one of ’em already.

As for the comparison he makes, when he says, “ The religion and worship of the *Jews*, in our Saviour’s time, differed from that of the *Samaritans*,—as little, as yours now does from ours. And yet—that the religion and worship of the *Jews* had some great advantage in regard to *salvation*, above that of the *Samaritans*, and therefore surely was more acceptable to God. The truth is, says he, *That of the Samaritans was plainly founded in a schism, which spoiled the acceptance of it,—and as the worship of Dissenters is also founded in a schism,—it is thereby corrupted, &c.*” But

Dr.

Dr. Burkit did not, it seems, find this doctrine in that place, *John* iv. 20----24. but he observes upon it, “ How ready and forward persons of a *false religion* are to ascribe too much to antiquity, and to the *example and custom of their forefathers*. Whereas (says he) it is not the continuance of a thousand or two thousand years that can make any thing truly antient in matters of religion, but that which can derive its original from him that is truly called *the antient of days*.” In which I think he fully expresses the mind of the Dissenters. And what is it to derive our religion from the antient of days, but to take it from our Lord Jesus Christ himself, as it is fully contained in the New Testament, and not from the doctors of the church, or human laws ?

“ I shall not (says our author *) trouble myself with examining the *small* reasons, which many of you have for your dissent,----” But it appears he has meddled with no other to any purpose ; and he is forced to own (tho’ he charges it on the Dissenters) that there are some of *their own church*, and of all persuasions, that are guilty of such *unreasonableness* and *folly*, as to *continue* in that way in which they were trained up, *because their fathers were such*, ’twas *the way of their forefathers*, and they will *do the same* ; *worshipping God on that mountain, because their fathers before them did so*. Why then does he in special mention the Dissenters in this case ? and why does he so often catch at their *slight* and *weak reasons*, which the conscionable Dissenters will not allow to be *their reasons*, and which are, at least, as applicable to the church-people themselves, as to those he would reproach by them. But he goes on, and says,

† “ Nor shall I need to expose the *corrupt motives* which, you cannot deny, influence great numbers to be of your way,——in confidence to a particular friend,——some expectance they have from rich, childless friends, —— some hope to promote their trade and business, by getting *all* their neighbours of that way, besides their share of their conforming neighbours, (which they scarcely ever fail to do) to be their customers, or clients. You know this is a common thing amongst you. This is the way so many of you *thrive* in the world : and then their *thriving* furnishes an useful observation, which (*I am told*) is sometimes whispered in the ears of churchmen
(*doubtless,*

* *White’s Prot. Dissenter guided*, p. 28. 29. † *Ibid.* p. 30.
31.

“ (*doubtless*, by way of bait and allurement to them) that
 “ — *for the most part Dissenters are seen to prosper in the*
 “ *world beyond others* *.” And then,

“ I do not suspect you, my good neighbour, to be *at all*
 “ influenced by motives of this kind, and have *no reason* to
 “ think otherwise, than that you *are fully persuaded* in
 “ your own mind, and, so far as that goes, *sincere in your*
 “ *way.*”

For my part I know nothing of this, That Dissenters are more prosperous in the world than others; doubtless many of 'em would be glad to find it so; but perhaps, if our author should review this he will recant it, because it seems to be an acknowledgment that the Dissenters use their customers better, and also *love one another* more than others do: for one of these brings their own friends, (*viz.* their love to one another) and the other, (*viz.* using their customers better) fills their shops with their share of their conforming neighbours: and will not Mr. *White* think either of these (and especially when both meet together) to be too great a commendation for the Dissenters? And

As to their whispering these things in the ears of churchmen to allure 'em to their way, as I am an utter stranger to it, I must leave it to those Dissenters that practise it, (if any such there be) and to those churchmen into whose ears they whisper.

But was not our author imposed upon in this matter, being too credulous? False rumours are sometimes industriously spread to blacken the character of such as deserve better, and especially of that or *this sect* †, which thro' ignorance or malice, *is every where spoken against*. And why should not Mr. *White* have entertain'd as good an opinion, and shown as much charity for the Dissenters in general (whom he knew not) as for his *good neighbour*, whom he knew so well?

We have seen above, that he charges our separation with occasioning the loss of *truth*, and *peace*, and the *utter extinction of charity amongst us*; but is not this a plain instance then, where, and on whom, this heavy charge ought to rest? Had *his* charity, which is couch'd in such a fair speech to his neighbour, been real; or if his neighbour could think it so, then, probably, his good advice in the following words might be kindly taken, and so the more likely to do
good,

* See the beginning of the gentleman's first letter, “ *Worldly considerations are very strong on your side, &c.*”

† *Acts* xxviii. 22.

good, viz. “ But if, looking narrowly into your heart, you should find any motives of *this* kind lurking there, I intreat you, for God’s sake, to renounce them all, as temptations that may be fatal to you.” But ’tis hard to think *that* charity to be *real* which is not universal.

But when the Dissenters have well examined their own hearts, and can find there *no such corrupt motives*, but that they also are *sincere in their way*, and perhaps have gone against wind and tide to embrace what they believe to be truth, tho’ they’ll despise no good counsel, yet they can hardly take such a procedure, in the whole, quite so cordial, as otherwise they would do.

There are, no doubt, *corruptions* amongst the Dissenters, and so there are amongst the *clergy* too, (who pretend they are the only guides of the people ;) there was so formerly, (and, I fear, they are not mended ;) of which I could give very notorious instances, but I forbear. Is not this then to lay that upon the Dissenters (as the reasons and motives of their separation) which they deny, and which cannot be prov’d upon ’em, as proper to them, but belongs to the *ignorant and selfish* of any profession ?

Our author says *, “ If men would justify their separation on to any purpose, they should say, (if they can make it out) that the way they have forsaken is not the same, nor any thing like it, &c.” And then, “ Nothing in my judgment, will justify any separation like yours, but the requiring of you something unlawful to be done, or,----- imposing upon you sinful terms of communion, such, for instance, as the worship of the consecrated bread or wafer, the worship of saints, angels, images, and crucifixes, as is done in the church of *Rome*.”

The controversy then, or the true state of the case between us is, Whether (as the dissenting gentleman observes in his *first letter*, and which if our author had answer’d, as he should, might have put an end to any further dispute in the case ; I say, whether) according to the XXth article of the church of *England*, which the clergy solemnly subscribe to, *hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith*. If it hath, then †, “ If instead of two or three ceremonies, it had enjoined two or three score ; and if to the *thirty-nine articles* it had added an hundred besides, we ought meekly to have bowed down
“ to

* Dissenter guided, &c. p. 21. 22. † Let. i. p. 4. 5. &c.

“ to her *spiritual jurisdiction*, and to have practised and
 “ believed as the church had taught and enjoined.

“ But on the contrary, he shews at large in this letter,
 “ that the church hath really and in truth, *no power at all*
 “ nor *authority* of this kind.” But to shorten this work, I
 must refer you to him.

The gentleman says *, upon occasion of that restriction
 the *church of England* adds in its said XXth article, *viz. It*
is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is con-
trary to God's word written, &c. That then,

“ 1st, Whatever *ceremony* or *rite* cannot be shewn to
 “ be contrary to God's word, your church, yea, the *church*
 “ of *Rome* hath full authority to enjoin : consequently, as
 “ your church, by virtue of this authority, hath enjoined
 “ the *cross* in *baptism*, it hath full power also to require you
 “ to *cross yourselves*, whenever you enter the place of wor-
 “ ship, say your prayers, look toward the east, touch the
 “ bible, sit at meat.——It hath full power to enjoin the
 “ use of salt and spittle in baptism, chrism, extreme unction,
 “ and an hundred other things, which are no more con-
 “ trary to God's word than the cross in baptism is.”

——Yet Mr. *White* says†, *The question is not about a*
cumbersome multitude of impertinent ceremonies, &c.

“ 2dly, (He says) The *limitation* or *guard*, which the
 “ article seems to put upon *this power* of the church, is real-
 “ ly of no force, and amounts to nothing at all.

“ For tho' it says —— That the church *may not or-*
 “ *dain any thing contrary to God's word, nor so expound one*
 “ *scripture as to be repugnant to another* : yet of this *repug-*
 “ *nance* and *contrariety*, the church alone, you will observe,
 “ and not every *private person*, is allowed to be the proper
 “ judge : for else the article is absurd ; it actually overthrows
 “ itself ; and takes away, with one hand, what it gives
 “ with the other. For, if every *private person* hath au-
 “ thority to judge of the church's decisions, and to *reject*
 “ them, if they appear to him repugnant to scripture, then
 “ the church's authority in points of faith comes to just no-
 “ thing at all. It is an authority to decree, where none
 “ are bound to submit ; that is, an authority over nobody,
 “ an authority to do nothing. But such a senseless, un-
 “ meaning, impertinent claim, can never be the design and
 “ import of *this article*. It does claim therefore for the
 “ church some *real authority* to settle points of faith ; con-
 “ sequently,

* Lett. 1. p. 8. &c. † p. 50.

“ frequently, to points thus *authoritatively* settled by it,
 “ private Christians, its members, are reverently to submit,
 “ even tho’ to their own judgments they appear repugnant
 “ to the word of God.”

He proceeds farther, and says*, “ In consequence of
 “ this claim, your church hath *authoritatively* decreed
 “ *thirty-nine* articles of faith; and these it declares to have
 “ decreed *for the taking away difference of opinion, and to*
 “ *establish an agreement in true religion.* The plain language
 “ of *authority.* These articles it obliges all its ministers to
 “ subscribe; and our *princes*, as heads and governors of the
 “ *church*, have *authoritatively* forbid its clergy to preach any
 “ thing repugnant to them, and required them to frame
 “ their sermons according to the plan here prescribed.
 “ ——— But if the *church of England* has really this autho-
 “ rity and right, the *church of Rome* had it before her;
 “ and, as the elder and *mother church*, ought to have been
 “ obeyed. The reformation, therefore, as we are wont to
 “ call it, was a rebellion against superiors, a disobedience to
 “ the authority vested in *the church*, and ought, as such,
 “ to be renounced by returning to the *church of Rome.*”

This he shows, is the consequence of this article which
 the clergy of the *church of England* solemnly subscribe to,
 and that therefore they cannot answer a *Romish priest* who
 shall turn upon ’em the church’s own dangerous artillery.

And now after all that which the dissenting gentleman
 says in his first letter, which, for brevity’s sake, I must
 omit, how could our author put forth such a tract as this,
pretending that the Dissenters had no sufficient reasons for
 their separation, but that they were under binding and *in-*
dispensable obligations to embrace the communion of their church?
 He himself owns, and says†, “ I readily confess, if the
 “ *church* errs in *fundamentals*, or in points necessary to
 “ salvation, *exacting* of its members *declarations or practices*,
 “ conformable thereto, they will be then excusable, if they
 “ withdraw from it.”

But Mr. J. Rogers, D.D. is yet more plain and full,
 and says,

“ † If such *union* — be, to *christians* — a duty founded
 “ on *plain precepts* of the gospel, a breach of *this union*,
 “ where it can be preserved, must be a sin: which sin has
 “ obtained the name of *schism*, or *division*. If two or more
 “ particular churches set up different and opposite rules of
 C “ faith,

* *Ibid.* p. 10. 11. &c. † *White’s Guide*, p. 32. † *Per-*
 suasive to conformity, p. 17. 18. 19. 20.

“ faith, refuse to communicate with each other in worship,
 “ in *breaking of bread*, and in *prayer*, and renounce each other’s
 “ administrations, there is doubtless a schism, a breach
 “ of Christian union, between them. And this breach is
 “ much aggravated, if these churches were under the tie
 “ of a mutual contract and association to preserve commu-
 “ nion with each other in these instances. In like man-
 “ ner, if any members of a particular church renounce its
 “ worship and assemblies, refuse to communicate with it in
 “ the ordinances of Christian religion, withdraw all obedi-
 “ ence from the guides and pastors of it, and set up distinct
 “ assemblies in opposition to it, there is evidently a schism
 “ between the members of that church; a breach of that
 “ spiritual union and *bond of peace* which Christian religi-
 “ on prescribes. The only question is, *who* in these cases
 “ are schismatics, or on *whom* the guilt of such separati-
 “ on lies.

“ Now it is acknowledg’d, that to every particular
 “ church and to every single Christian the *laws* of Christ are
 “ of *prior* and *greater* obligation than any other social laws
 “ of *outward* union and concord. For the fundamental
 “ principle upon which Christians are united in these socie-
 “ ties is, that they may jointly observe the laws † of Christ.
 “ This is the primary condition and stipulation of their
 “ union; and *all* the obedience they owe to the rules, and
 “ *all* the submission they promise to the authority of such
 “ society, is under the *reserve* of this condition——That
 “ it consists with obedience to Christ. If therefore *any*
 “ church or churches shall *depart* from, or *corrupt* the com-
 “ mon faith, *mix* idolatry or *superstition* in their worship †,
 “ and require an approbation and concurrence in these cor-
 “ ruptions as terms of communion, *they* have broken the
 “ original stipulation; and ’tis *not only* lawful for other
 “ churches, but their *duty* to separate from them, and *re-*
 “ *nounce* their communion. And in this case, the churches
 “ which thus corrupt themselves, and render it unlawful
 “ for others to communicate with them, are guilty of the
 “ schism, and *not those which depart from them*. And for
 “ the same reasons §, every single member of such a cor-
 “ rupt church is *justify’d* in *withdrawing* himself from its
 “ society and communion; neither will *he* be guilty of
 “ *schism*

† This, we think, is a full justification of our separation from
 the church.

§ See to the same purpose the ever memorable Mr. *John Hale*,
 of *Eaton college*, his tract of schism. 1700.

“ *schism* in so doing, but the church which requires those
 “ unlawful terms of communion, *will be guilty of the*
 “ *schism*.

“ Nay I will acknowledge to you farther, that tho’
 “ the terms of communion with any church be in them-
 “ selves lawful, yet if any person is *persuaded in his mind*
 “ that they are unlawful, he *cannot*, while such persuasion
 “ continues, *comply with them without sin*; for to him who
 “ thinks them sin, to him they are sin, his will is equally
 “ criminal, and he would as certainly have done it if it had
 “ been really one. But I must here observe to him who
 “ acts under such a mistaken persuasion, that his excuse be-
 “ fore God will depend on the care and diligence he has
 “ used in informing himself. If he has taken up this per-
 “ suasion from passion and prejudice, hastily and without
 “ due examination, and neglected the proper means of his
 “ information, his *error* itself will be *one sin*, and his sepa-
 “ ration in consequence of it another; for God will not
 “ allow us to plead one sin in excuse of another.”

This I take to be an excellent *definition* of the nature and
 sin of schism, (so much wanting in Mr. *White*) for which the
 Dissenters will heartily thank him. ’Tis rational and cha-
 ritable, and, as I take it, proceeding from a good judgment,
 and a good conscience; and therefore his caution and ap-
 plication of it to the Dissenters, (tho’ therein he joins with
 our author in supposing ’tis they are in the error) must needs
 be acceptable to them, since it appears so full of charity, and
 he bespeaks them as brethren, and puts it to each party to
 make the application to themselves; whereas Mr. *White*, on
 the contrary, throughout his book all along charges the
 guilt of schism home upon them, not once suspecting him-
 self, or those of his own church; for thus he speaks *, “ It
 “ is not fit that the church’s peace should be broken, and a
 “ *fearful schism* made in it—Your real edification is your
 “ growing in faith and holiness: but is that to be done, by
 “ committing a *great sin*, and staining your souls with *guilt*,
 “ as by *making a schism in the church you most certainly do*.”
 And again, “ † *I esteem your schism or separation from the*
 “ church *absolutely* sinful—All Christian people are
 “ commanded to *obey and submit themselves to those who are*
 “ *set over them, and watch for their souls*; — and tho’
 “ there *may be* cases, wherein it may *bear some question*,
 “ what church you are rightfully subject to, and who are

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“ your

* Dissenter guided, p. 54. 55. † *Ibid.* p. 97. 98. 100. 101.
 102.

“ your rightful guides; there is *no room* for that question
 “ here in *England*; and the publick, regular *, *authorised*
 “ pastors of the church now established, are of right, the
 “ *only* spiritual guides and governors of *all* the people of this
 “ land. To divide themselves from these, *requiring no-*
 “ *thing* † of them but *what is lawful*, is a formal and pro-
 “ per *schism*—You add to your sin a great deal of other
 “ hazard—Your *safer way* must be to embrace the
 “ communion of the church, where you are *absolutely sure*
 “ of having pastors *duly* appointed to their office, and *all*
 “ the ordinances of God administered with effect.—By the
 “ view then we have taken of this matter, it plainly appears,
 “ that you are guilty of a *most heinous schism*, in throwing
 “ off the authority, and withdrawing yourselves from the
 “ communion of those catholic ‡ bishops and priests, to
 “ whom you are *properly* subject. And it is *some aggrava-*
 “ *tion* of your guilt, in that you do it against the laws of
 “ your country, which have established the church of
 “ *England*, and require all to conform to it. Nor will it
 “ avail you to plead in contradiction to this the act of to-
 “ leration. For though, by that you are exempted from
 “ the *pains and penalties*, you are not released from the
 “ obligation of former laws, in joining conformity to the
 “ church ||.”

Thus stands our author's argument to prove the Dissenters
 guilty of the *heinous sin of schism*, only because they peace-
 ably and conscionably separate themselves from the commu-
 nion of the church of *England*, which they believe to be cor-
 rupted, and to have retained so many of *Rome's* relicks, that
 'tis *defiled*, and is not the spotless spouse of Christ, as she
 pretends to be; and therefore on the same grounds and
 principles as she separates from the church of *Rome* do we
 separate from her. And this the dissenting gentleman has
 shewn large enough, though Mr. *White* takes so little no-
 tice of it, that he unaccountably asserts “ § It is well
 “ known, that heaping together some defects, or abuses in
 “ our church, (often only imaginary ones) or *collecting* a
 “ few matters, against which you think something *plausible*
 “ may be said, but which is *not pretended* to be sinful, or *any*
 “ way destructive of salvation, and proposing *these* to the
 “ people,

* All this is well answer'd in the dissenting gentleman's first letter, &c. † Were this fact we should yield: but, &c.

‡ This is only begging the question. || A spirit of persecution. See gent. lett. 2. p. 47. § Dissenter guided, p. 25. 26.

“ people, as solid grounds for your separation, is your common and most approved way of defending it.”

But so far are the Dissenters from approving such a method of defending their cause, that they greatly complain of our author for having himself used this method of *collecting the Dissenters small reasons*, or things which *they disown*, against which he thought *something might be plausibly said*; and will hardly touch what are their reasons indeed: for if he had, he ought to have taken off the force of the dissenting gentleman's argument, or have answer'd *Thomas de Laune*, who perished in prison for writing a *plea for the Nonconformists*; which has been printed a great many times, and remains (I suppose) unanswer'd, because unanswerable: and several other authors I could name. And yet, as I have shewn you, our author peremptorily lays the charge of schism on the Dissenters. For as for the reasons he has cook'd up for us, which we disown, tho' they perhaps may serve him for starting-holes, when he is press'd; yet he will never by that means wipe off the *stain from his soul*, (as the gentleman's words are) which he must needs have contracted by charging *the Dissenters* of so many things as he does without good grounds and reasons for it. For what is it for him to say, “ You are not at liberty to separate *without reason, because you have a mind, or it is your pleasure, &c.* That there is a notion mightily prevailing amongst us, that every one is as much at liberty to be of what church, or party of Christians, he *pleases*, as he is to go to what *tavern*, or to be of what *club* he likes best;” when we know of no such notion *prevailing* amongst us? Nor do we separate to *please our humour*, nor *confess* that we *have little or no reason for our separation*, or that *our religion differs but little from theirs*; for we judge in our consciences there is an essential difference. “ I could (says he *) say yet a great deal more, to *shew you* the vanity of this notion, that every one is at liberty, &c.” But, I say, what is all this when 'tis deny'd? and all the corrupt reasons he mentions, are, at least, as applicable to themselves as to the Dissenters, as he himself † *partly* owns. And is it not strange and unaccountable for him to assert ‡, “ This ground of your separation is also manifestly weak, (*viz.* to separate for *less defective ways of worship*) unless the defects with which you would charge our worship are *essential*, which I HAVE NOT HEARD ANY PROTESTANT DISSENTERS HAVE EVER PRETENDED THEM TO BE?” No! what

* *Ibid.* p. 17. † p. 29. ‡ p. 42.

what then did he and the dissenting gentleman contend about? But if he has not yet heard, he will give me leave to tell him, that we do say, there is an *essential difference*, as I shall, perhaps, more clearly show you presently. But note first our author begins with this confidence, *viz.* *

“ Good neighbour !

“ The care of *your soul* being committed to me, and it being therefore my duty to shew you the *good way* wherein you should go, *the way leading to eternal life*, and to point out to you *all your wanderings from it*, I suppose I shall need no apology for applying myself to you in the manner I am going to do in the following papers. For, in short, my design therein is, to try to remove those *groundless* and *unreasonable* exceptions which, I apprehend, you have taken to the church of *England*, and whereby you are kept in a state of *schism* or separation from it, to the prejudice of your souls health, and, I fear, the hindrance of your salvation; especially, if you should (which God, however, forbid) refuse instruction, and turn a deaf ear to the things which your pastor, your proper pastor (for so I am, whether you will own me in that character, or not) has to offer to you, and professes to offer under the fullest persuasion of their importance to your eternal welfare; or (which is much the same thing) if you will not consider them without passion and prejudice, if you will not resolve to lay aside all worldly regards, and keep your mind perfectly open to conviction, as sincerity requires you to do.”

It would be uncharitable to think that our author did not believe and apprehend, suppose and fear, offer, profess, and that under a full persuasion too, throughout his performance; but then, have not the Dissenters too a liberty to believe and be persuaded for themselves? They are, I believe, persuaded, that he has quite mistaken their case; that he is not their proper pastor; that he himself is not free from passion, and prejudice, and all worldly regards: witness his heavy charge against the Dissenters†, which he seems to have taken upon uncertain report. I hope, notwithstanding, (as the dissenting gentleman professed he had done) that the Dissenters in general, who are properly so called, (*i. e.* who act upon principle and the dictates of their conscience, for of others I make no account) are, as he would have 'em, without passion or prejudice, and are no more influenced by world-

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* *Ibid.* p. 7. 8. † p. 30. 31. See, in this, p. 11. 12.

ly regards than his good dissenting neighbour was, but are open to conviction, and ready to receive the truth as soon as 'tis discover'd to 'em, let it come from what quarter it will, yea, supposing it comes from an inveterate enemy. But notwithstanding all that he says to the contrary, * they have a liberty from scripture, antiquity, reason, and the judgment of Protestants, to chuse their own pastors, and must by no means follow strangers, or those who bring not this doctrine †, as the dissenting gentleman has fully shown. To which our author's answer is in the pages above referr'd to, and what he wants in argument, he would (if 'twere possible) make up in assurance and confidence; for thus he writes:

“ Now I know no cautions, advices, or precepts in the
 “ scripture, setting forth, or implying any such right,
 “ (viz. for Lay-christians to chuse their pastors;) and, I am
 “ sure, the scripture-instances and examples which are com-
 “ monly alledged in support of it, such as the election of
 “ Matthias in the room of Judas, and of the seven dea-
 “ cons, are nothing at all to the purpose.——” He
 would have it, that (as to the election of Matthias) tho' the speech of St. Peter, was spoken in the midst, or in the audience of all the disciples, it was directed or spoken to the apostles, and that the words, *they appointed two*, can refer to no other than the apostles, because to them he addressed his speech; but how so? are the words *men and brethren*, to be referr'd to the apostles only? Does not every novice (in the school of Christ) know that they refer to Christians in general, and then especially, to all who were children of the stock of Abraham, Acts xiii. 26. And as for the seven deacons, he here says over again, (tho' the dissenting gentleman had before answered it in scripture words) that, *they were but presented or recommended by the brethren.*——And then he says nothing to the gentleman's citations from antiquity, viz. from Ignatius and Cyprian, &c. shewing that bishops and pastors were chosen by the church, or by the favour and vote of all the people. Nor does he take any notice of this,

“ † But imagine yourself, Sir, for a moment on the other
 “ side the water, preaching this wholesome doctrine to the
 “ good Protestants in France. If kings, bishops, &c. have au-
 “ thority and right to appoint pastors to the people, then the
 “ people are bound to receive and attend the pastors they
 “ send. But if this be right in one country—'tis right also
 “ in another; unless one kingdom can produce a warrant,
 “ or

* Ibid. p. 59.—70. † 2 John 10. 1 John. iv. 1. &c.

† Gentleman's 2d Lett. p. 57.

“ or charter from heaven, giving it *such authority*, which
 “ *other kingdoms* have not. If this doctrine be truth in
 “ *England*, 'tis truth also in *France*. The brave *Protest-*
 “ *ants* then have *rashly* and *unwarrantably* withdrawn them-
 “ selves from the pastors, whom their *king* and *bishops* had
 “ set over them ; they ought to return, and submit to their
 “ *established* guides, and not *proudly* attempt to find mini-
 “ sters more able and orthodox, than those *their superiors*
 “ have solemnly deputed to that trust.——Will you stand,
 “ Sir, to this doctrine? If not, you must allow every man
 “ a right to judge for himself.”

But as to the *laity*, our author thinks, * 'tis nothing to
 them what is required of ministers ; for *they* are *not* to
 wear the *surplice*, nor to make the *sign of the cross* on the
 child's forehead, and they that have no children, have *no*
godfathers to provide, supposing that to be wrong ; and it
 would be quite ridiculous (says he) in *unmarried persons*—to
 give that as a reason for their nonconformity.——And after-
 “ wards says, “ If † you Lay-dissenters have no reason
 “ upon your own accounts, to separate from us, it would
 “ be mighty odd, if you should think you ought to do it,
 “ purely on *their* accounts, that *they* may have an audience
 “ to preach to, and be maintained by : no ; do you only
 “ resolve to leave them ; and then, you shall see, they
 “ will consider the case of ministerial conformity more im-
 “ partially ; and think better on it ; or else follow you to
 “ church in the quality of laymen : one or other of these,
 “ you may depend upon it, they will soon do.”

But the Dissenters judge otherwise of these matters ; they
 believe they should not go to, or that 'tis not safe for 'em to
 be present, or to join in any sort of superstitious or idolatrous
 worship, tho' themselves should not be actually required to
sacrifice. For ‡ are not they which eat of the sacrifices, par-
 takers of the altar? Therefore, we are required to come
 out from among them, and be separate, and not so much as to
 touch the unclean thing. And Dr. Burkitt's notes, on these
 two places, will justify us, tho' he says indeed, on 2 Cor. vi.
 16. that the Separatists misapply this text to very bad pur-
 poses : to justify their schismatical separation from the best and
 purest of the reformed churches. In which he joins with our
 author, or rather our author with him ; but the Dissenters
 in their consciences believe otherwise, and appeal to the fu-
 ture judgment for trial. But in the mean time, how can Mr.

White

* Dissenter guided, p. 23. † Ibid. p. 27. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 14.
 — 18. & 2 Cor. vi. 17.

White justify his argument consistently with *Burkitt*? And, as he observes, the apostle speaks to *wise men*, and *puts it to themselves to judge* of the fitness or unfitness of their being present, &c. must it not be very strange in our author, to tell the Lay-nonconformists*, that the declaration in the burial-office†—is *no reason* for any *layman's* withdrawing from the church, *because it is not made by him*; and if its being made by the minister officiating disturbs and offends him, he *need not be present*, &c. For that must sure be a very odd sort of communion where the members of the church must take so much care and caution, when they *may* be present, and when they *must* be absent from the assembly, that their conscience be not thereby defiled: and how if they should suppose it to be idolatrous to kneel before the altar, or at the sacrament? ‡ How then can they partake of it?—

As to *bowing at the name of Jesus*, our author says, ||
 “ Though it be enjoined the *laity*—it is not rigorously requir-
 “ ed of any, and you may live and die in the communion
 “ of the church without ever once observing it.” § Suppose this, would not that high-minded stubborn man, who *refuses* to bow at the most worthy name (tho’ your canons *strictly* enjoin it on him) be looked upon by the more *humble* worshippers, as the *speckled bird* amongst his fellows? And this is not all, for if it be true which some of your own doctors say, “ † That the bowing at the *altar*, and the
 “ name of *Jesus*, &c. are superstitious idolatries;” I doubt those that stand amongst them, and “ join with the other
 “ parts of their worship, will not be excused, tho’ they do
 “ not actually bow **——as their companions do; then let
 “ them not be deceived, &c.”

Our author says, “ †† I do not perceive it is pretended
 “ by those of your ministers who are *most judicious*, that
 “ the terms of communion with our church are in them-
 “ selves sinful. I speak only of the terms of lay-commu-
 “ nion, or the things which the *laity* are necessarily con-
 “ cern’d in, and *obliged to*, in order to their communicat-
 “ ing with us.” I believe we shall not be forward to allow our author to be a competent judge as to what ministers amongst us are *most judicious*, since we find him so
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p. 24. † See dissenting gent. 2d lett. p. 26—29. ‡ See gent.’s lett. 1. p. 17. 18. || p. 24. § Gent.’s 2d lett. p. 62. † Synop. papif. Dr. Willet, p. 492. *Hickeringill’s* ceremony-monger, p. 30. &c. ** *Rom. xi. 4. & Gal. vi. 7*
 †† p. 26.

deficient in his management in this tract, however plausible his propositions are; for had he impartially read and consider'd *Thomas de Laune's plea for the Nonconformists*, or *Stennett's Answer to Ruffen*, which he had seen he could scarce have presumed to say, that the most judicious amongst us don't pretend their terms of communion to be sinful or unlawful: and whatever they may be to them, they would most certainly be sinful to us, yea, to the laity, because such a compliance is required (as *de Laune* observes *) in "above forty particulars, which however minc'd and extenuated may be of the same nature with *Jeroboam's idolatry*." I say, a compliance with 'em in these things, would be sinful to us, because they are contrary to the convictions of our consciences; and this will fully justify our separation, as Mr. *Rogers* has ingenuously acknowledged †. But, "this principle, (says our author ‡) that your nonconformity is not to be justified upon account of things which the laity have no concern in, or may, if they please, decline, is so evidently right, that it would betray some distrust of your common sense to go about to prove it in a more ample manner.—" It is nothing to you, (for instance) whether the gentlemen, your ministers, had, or had not, reason to refuse the usual subscription and declaration, or the oath of canonical obedience to the bishop." That is—in plainer words; you must take the clergy to be your guides, leaders, &c. right or wrong; 'tis no matter to you what they are, or do; let 'em take the most solemn oaths, concerning the articles of religion, (as they do) and never regard to keep 'em, but constantly break 'em, or if they are men of corrupt lives, and preach false doctrines — your business is not to dispute nor question any thing concerning them; but by a blind obedience submit yourselves to their authority, without examination, &c. which sort of doctrine (as the dissenting gentleman has observ'd) will serve as well in *France*, and at *Rome*, as in *England*; and how then have the laity NO CONCERN in these things? We are ready to say with him, If the laity see no reason to separate on their own accounts, their ministers don't desire they should do it for their sakes; for all the true ministers of the gospel, preach CHRIST and not themselves, they are not hirelings, who divine for money, and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. These would not preach at all were it not for a stipend or maintenance. Some of the dissenting ministers take

* Plea, p. 30. † Persuasive, p. 18. 19. 20. ‡ Dissenter guided, p. 24.—27. || See *Hale's tract of schism*, p. 7.

take no pay at all ; and those that have their *maintenance* of the people because *the labour is worthy of his hire*, and *the workman of his meat* ; yet *theirs* is *no forced maintenance*, but the *liberal* contributions of the people : they preach also *in season and out of season* without additional pay, whereas a *clergyman* will *scarce* preach a funeral sermon, if desired, without being pretty well paid for the same ; but whether *that* be the reason why funeral sermons are so *very seldom* preached among them——I shall not take upon me to say, or what other reason they may have for it. 'Tis therefore to be supposed, (if charity take place as it ought) that the *Lay-dissenters*, being sensible of the *errors* in the *constitution* and *practice* of *that church* which they have forsaken, and being satisfied of the *true principles* of the churches they have joined themselves with, do agree to *chuse for themselves* ministers which will *feed them with knowledge and understanding* agreeable to the *principles* of truth which (they are *fully persuaded in their own mind*) they have received. And I shall refer those that desire to see more of the reasonableness of the Lay-dissenters forsaking *the church* and the *corruptions of the clergy*, to the places below *.

As to the *want of a godly discipline*, and the reason we have for our dissent on that account, I refer you to the *dissenting gentleman* †, and to *a letter of advice to the churches of the Nonconformists*—*shewing who are the true church of England* ‡, and to plain reasons, 1. For dissenting, &c. 2. Why Dissenters are not, nor can be guilty of schism, in peaceably separating, &c. ||

As to the *lives of Dissenters*, &c. of which our author speaks §, and says, “Thy now live pretty much at the rate other people do.” And that, “whoever lives to see it, will, *probably*, find all distinction between Churchmen and Dissenters, in regard to their lives, absolutely lost in another generation.” This is a sort of acknowledgment, however, that at present there is *some difference*, and that the Dissenters have the preference. But as to *this*, “and amongst which the best means for *holy living* are found, (as the *dissenting gentleman* observes **,) let the world be judge betwixt us. Would to God that

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“ both

* *Warne's spirit of the martyrs* reviv'd &c. 1740. Bp. *Burnet's* new preface, p. 5. 6. Ecclesiastical self-seeking ; a visitation-sermon preached at *Halsted* in *Essex*, April 12. 1632 and printed with three others, dedicated to the Rt. Hon. *Arthur Lord Capel Baron of Haddam*, in 1642. † Lett. 2d, p. 30.—38.

‡ p. 13. &c. || Plain reasons, &c. p. 20. 21. printed 1719. § p. 76.—81. ** Lett. 1. p. 4.

“ both of us had greater reason to boast ! ” And as to his saying that *probably whoever lives to see it, will find, &c.* ’tis sufficient to say, that *probably* too our author *may be* mistaken. But when he asserts, “ that this principle, *that is the best church or religion wherein people live best*, is, in reality, no better than a *pitiful* piece of popery. We find it in all the *popish* writers, Sanctity of life, according to them, is an infallible mark whereby the true church is to be known : and therefore they are evermore magnify the *prayers* and *devotions*, the *watchings*, the *fostings*, the mortifications, the charities, and the contempt of the world, which so many in their church have been eminent for, in order to convince you it is the true church. By this bait those fishers of men catch many Protestants.”

Well, and has not our author also magnified * *their more effectual provision for edification, in their teaching and preserving the true faith, by means of the three creeds, the great articles of faith being more frequently and professedly handled in the church ; the fasts and festivals ; the many more appointments for promoting holiness of life ; the use of godfathers and godmothers ; on which he can't help laying a good deal of stress ; their forms of prayer ; their responses ; the publick reading of the scripture ; the humble posture of kneeling ; the copiousness and comprehensiveness of their liturgy ; and their more frequent opportunities for publick worship, or their daily publick prayers ?* But as to *holiness of life*, whether it be found in *Quakers* (whom he also in this case mentions) or in *Papists* ; if it be *real*, it deserves commendation ; and how then does he call this *a pitiful piece of popery* ? Are men to be degraded for holding and maintaining the truth according to the scripture, because they are of this or that party ? The only question is, amongst whom is this *real holiness* to be found ? They may indeed catch men by *specious pretences* to holiness, and the means they have of advancing it, (and who more aims at this than our author ?) But the dissenting gentleman has shewn † that the *Papists* have another way by which they gain many proselytes from the church of England, viz. from the mere concessions of their XXth article, which saith, that *the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, &c.* for as he also well observes, if the church of England has really this authority and right, the church of Rome had it before her ; and as the elder and mother-church,

ought

* Dissenter guided, p. 82.—96.

† Lett. i. p. 11. 12.

ought to have been obeyed. And this indeed, is *dangerous artillery*—in the hands of a *Romish priest*. But 'tis not the *specious pretences* of *Papists*, (or of any others) to *mortification*, *charity*, *holiness of life*, or *pure and undefiled religion*, which will prove they really have the thing; no more than the *single lives* of their *clergy*, or the *severity* of their *monks* and *nuns*, proves their *chastity*, nor will their *penances*, or other their *superstitious* orders and ordinances avail 'em; tho' (if you'll believe 'em*) they have found out *other ways of salvation* besides, or rather, perhaps, without Christ, or *holiness of life* either. But will it therefore follow, that *real holiness* and *purity of life*, is no evidence at all of pure religion? Sure this must be an unwarrantable and dangerous principle; for is not this one main and principal thing which the gospel recommends? 'Tis reasonable sure to expect good fruit from a good tree, and good life from sound principles; and 'tis contrary to the nature and reason of things when 'tis otherwise. And from hence give me leave to warn every professor of Christian religion (of what denomination soever) to take heed of this deceit, as to think that any religion will save 'em without real holiness of life, for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. See 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. Eph. v. 5. 6. God will not be mocked, for *whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap*. So that let a man's principles be ever so pure, yet if his life be *unholy*, his religion will avail him nothing: and therefore holiness of life and purity of principles must not be separated. I don't intend by this to insinuate that Mr. *White* has wholly separated 'em, but only that he has not set a due value on that purity and holiness of life, without which none can be a true Christian, nor allow'd it to be such an *evidence* as our Lord and his apostles have assur'd us it is, when it is *real*, and not feigned and counterfeit.

It must be owned there are too many professors of *all sorts* that do not walk worthy of God.—But the *Dissenters* are not, in *general*, of such loose principles as Mr. *White* would suggest; That make the choice of their religion depend upon *fancy*, as a thing altogether *indifferent*, because *at the day of judgment, no body will be asked what church he was of*: for they believe 'tis their bounden duty to *ask for the old paths*, and *the good way*, and to *walk therein*. To be of that religion and profession of which Christ is the *author*, *apostle*, and *high priest*, and that they are not

to

* *Saul and Samuel at Endor*, or the new ways of salvation, &c. Oxford, 1674.

to follow the *traditions* or *inventions* of men, because Christ is their *only leader* and commander. They are not Dissenters *because their fathers were such*, nor are influenced by corrupt motives, &c. These I imagine are groundless surmises of our author's, or at best the effects of his listening to false or uncertain reports, which is not becoming a Christian, much less one of his *high pretensions*.

The Dissenters do not *allow of scepticks, infidels, libertines, rakes, sharpers*, or any other sort of scandalous livers to be members of their churches, but exercise a due discipline as near as they can agreeable to the word; and our author himself owns * the *Dissenters* have a *greater care* than the church of England has in *keeping unworthy persons from the sacrament*: To what purpose then did he spend about six pages in treating of the matter of discipline? And how unworthy a part has he acted in great part of his book, to treat *them* as dissenters, and to urge *their confessions in conversation*, &c. †, as the Dissenters *real reasons* for their separation, when he knows so well that the Dissenters *disown* those that are *scandalous* among 'em, and the *weak reasons* too which some of the most ignorant of 'em may, perhaps, give for their separation?

Our author says, “ ‡ I cannot but observe your inconsistency in condemning some of our ceremonies, while you have nothing to say against others. Thus the ceremony of casting earth upon the body in the burial of the dead is never censured, &c.” To this the *dissenting gentleman* answers at large ||, and shews that Mr. *White* has slid over, in consummate silence, one of the *greatest* and *most popular* objections to this *office of burial*: which indeed, says he, is not *ours* only, but an objection of some of the most illustrious members of your own church. Were you conscious the *objected passages* were incapable of defence, and therefore prudently let them drop? ” And he says, By Canon 68. they are obliged to read this service over some of the most ungodly persons;” for these are his words, “ Hence it comes to pass, that over some of the most *abandon'd* and *profligate* of mankind, over men who have been cut down in a course of open impiety by a sudden and untimely death, or who even fell by the hand of *justice* for some black and atrocious crime; over these, I say, your church, and I say it with astonishment, directs and commands you most solemnly to declare, *That almighty GOD of his GREAT MERCY has ta-*”

“ *ken*

* p. 74. † p. 18. ‡ p. 52. 53. || Diff. gent. lett. 2. p. 23.—30.

“ *ken to himself the soul of this your dear brother. You*
 “ *give God hearty thanks that it hath pleased him to deliver*
 “ *him out of the miseries of this sinful world: and you pray*
 “ *God, that when you yourselves shall depart out of this life,*
 “ *you may REST IN CHRIST, as your HOPE is this your bro-*
 “ *ther doth.*” The monstrousness of such a practice he
 further shows, but I think it speaks itself sufficiently, with-
 out more words, to the great *reproach* and *scandal* of the *bu-*
rial-office: yet, I can’t tell how to omit the following ad-
 miration of the gentleman, *viz.* “ Strange! and extremely
 “ shocking! what can the people think, Sir! what must
 “ *infidels* and *deists* think! when they hear you in the mor-
 “ *ning denouncing from the scriptures certain death and de-*
 “ *struction from the presence of God to all vicious and cor-*
 “ *rupt persons; and assuring them that without holiness NO*
 “ *MAN shall see the Lord: but in the evening from the*
 “ *common prayer, shall hear YOU, the SAME PERSON, de-*
 “ *claring before GOD your HOPE of the eternal happiness*
 “ *of one of the most debauch’d and profligate men your pa-*
 “ *rish affords; and sending him hence with all the lofty*
 “ *expressions of confidence and hope, as you would a person*
 “ *of the most shining and exemplary life.*”

“ Do you imagine, Sir, people do not think? Can
 “ you wonder *deism* prevails? that the priesthood is ridi-
 “ culed? and that your *good sermons* are no more effectual
 “ to reform a corrupt world? ” ———

“ But there is a further very *strange* and *extraordinary*
 “ circumstance attending this matter, *viz.* That it makes
 “ your church perform, not to say *a miracle*, but something
 “ very like it, if not greater than that, for it *damns* and
 “ *saves* the same individual persons. Whom it *damns*
 “ *when living*, it *saves when dead*. *Arians* and *Socinians*,
 “ you know, Sir, your church declares WITHOUT DOUBT
 “ *to perish everlastingly*. But let these very men *die*, and
 “ your church as solemnly declares that GOD *hath in GREAT*
 “ *MERCY taken them to himself*, and that it *HOPES they*
 “ *REST IN CHRIST*. Can any thing be more transcen-
 “ dant and marvellous than this! that the man whom I
 “ pronounce WITHOUT DOUBT *to be damned*, I yet *HOPE*
 “ *that he is saved, &c.*”

Now what does Mr. *White* answer to all this? Why only
 this, when he pretends to shew that *the laity or laymen have*
*no reason to separate for what the minister does **; you of
the laity, says he, for he *chooses* to repeat it, that it might be
 remarked;

* Dissenter guided, p. 23. 24.

remarked; “As to the declaration in the burial-office touching OUR HOPE of the happy state of the deceased in *certain cases*, is no reason for any Layman’s withdrawing from the church, because it is not *made* by him; and if its being made by the minister officiating disturbs and offends him, he *need not* be present at any time, when he apprehends it will be improperly made by him.” This has been before answered *; for how can any person join in communion with that church which actually requires *superstition* or *idolatry*, or the like, in some cases, (and, as they believe, at the altar itself) tho’ they may escape such worship in other instances by being absent? But it will not sink in my mind that any one’s refraining idolatrous worship (for instance) in one, or in a few cases, will excuse him, if at the same time he join with the like worship in other instances. And by this answer of Mr. *White* to the gentleman, about the *burial-office*, you may guess at the rest.

But perhaps he may say, he did not propose to answer the gentleman’s argument here: No; I suppose not, but ought he not to have done it if he could, when he pretends to answer all the Dissenters reasons, and arraigns ’em as miserable schismatics? And in his preface says, “The *three letters to a gentleman dissenting from the church of England*, has been on the part of the Dissenters replied to, in *such manner as they thought fit*, and vindicated by the author, so far as *occasion* was given him for it;—and that what he found in those writings *fit* for his purpose, he hath thought proper to take into this.” Which would even tempt one to say, That ’twas not his purpose to bring any thing into this tract which he could not make a *plausible* shew of answering, for that would have spoiled his aim with his readers.

In the next place our author says, “Then, there are the ceremonies of marriage, which neither your writers, now-a-days, *whatever* formerly they did, complain of, nor any of your people, so far as I can hear, stumble at; but all of you seem to go very readily, and chearfully through them. And tho’ you now call them *civil* ceremonies†, prescribed by the magistrate, that is no better than an excuse for your submitting to them. For *how* or

* p. 40—43. † Note, the dissenting gentleman does call ’em so, like as he said of the burial-office, which may shew us that his intention was to answer *him* as far as he could, tho’ he does not profess, nor would be seen to do it.

“ or *when*, or *where* has the magistrate prescribed *these*,
 “ more than he has the other ceremonies of the church ? ”

In this particular, I must confess, I think, our author has some advantage of us. He might well say, *whatever formerly they did*; for I suppose he had seen Mr. *Russen*'s accusation of the Baptists for their marrying among themselves, and Mr. *Stennett*'s answer *, who says thus: “ As for *marriage*,
 “ *they* (the Baptists) count it an ordinance of God, and the
 “ obligation of it the same, whether the ceremony be per-
 “ form'd after the manner of the church of *England* or o-
 “ therwise, if all that be done, which is necessary and es-
 “ sential to marriage. And one would think Mr. *Russen*
 “ himself will scarce condemn the marriages that are cele-
 “ brated in other nations and churches. 'Tis to be observ-
 “ ed, he confesses, that those of the Anabaptists, who are
 “ not married according to the form prescrib'd in the
 “ book of Common-Prayer, *use the words or the substance*
 “ of 'em, which are appointed for the words of marriage in
 “ the service-book; and that their marriages are solem-
 “ niz'd in the presence of *witnesses*, who sign a *certificate*,
 “ to testify the celebration of them, and are accompanied
 “ with suitable counsel and prayer.” But

De Laune observes †, that “ the rites and ceremonies of
 “ marriage, as express'd in the office of marriage in the
 “ liturgy, do not appear to have been in use in *those* primi-
 “ tive times. It being decreed by pope *Julius* and *Sirici-*
 “ *ous*, about the middle of the fourth century, *That all*
 “ *marriages must pass the benediction of a priest, on penalty of*
 “ *sacrilege*; the office being taken from the *Papists*, and
 “ those very restraints laid upon marriage, at what seasons
 “ people may marry, and when not, are taken out of the
 “ *Romish rubrick*. Pope *Clement* having ordain'd, that
 “ from *Septuagesima*, till *Easter*, from *Rogation*, till *Whit-*
 “ *sunday*; and from *Advent* to *Epiphany*, marriage should
 “ be prohibited: and which doctrine of devils is translated
 “ from their rubrick to ours.”

Upon the due consideration whereof, I must confess, it seems strange that the Dissenters who are reform'd as to other *popish* ceremonies which the church of *England* still retains, should, as Mr. *White* says, so *cheerfully* conform to this, tho' as to many, I believe, not so *cheerfully* as he imagines: for tho' they are, or ought to be *civil ceremonies*, as to marriage itself (but not excluding prayer and good counsel) yet since they must have the benediction of their priests,

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and

* Answer to *Russen*, p. 203. 204. † *De Laune's* plea, p. 43.

and be mixt with their superstitions, as kneeling before the altar, imitating thereby popish idolatry, stunted forms must be used, and they wedded with a ring, and the man's worshipping the woman, and all said to be done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost——I don't see but that it ministers occasion for just scruples to the Dissenters, that they should not conform to *this*, more than to other ceremonies of the church.

The Quakers in this case seem to act with the greatest simplicity, which therefore I recommend to the rest of the Dissenters *better* consideration, for now I think they have a loud call to it, since a B. D. accuses them for their conformity in this, because they don't conform in other cases.

Our author says, “ * The publick reading of the scripture “ is the ordinance of God, and was always practised in the “ *Jewish* church, as well as in the *Christian*. And in the “ writings of the antients wherein they describe the publick “ worship of the church, we are constantly told of the “ open reading of them, as a considerable part of it.” Which the Dissenters readily agree to; but when he adds, “ In our church also it is so;” and which he *looks upon as a distinguishing excellence and advantage of its publick service above what is to be found in the congregations of Dissenters*; the Dissenters judge otherwise in that. If you read Bishop Burnet's new preface, and observe (what he observ'd to the grief of his soul) that many of those ministers who came for orders, were themselves very ignorant of the *plainest* parts of the scriptures, and to excuse themselves say, *Our tutors in the university never mention'd the reading of them.* To this the Dissenters say, *What tutors are here!* And one of 'em says further, “ † Suppose *these* were all very learned men, “ (which cannot be granted) yet *they* have little need of it, “ provided they can read right: for *all* have their prayers “ made for them, and many of them their sermons too.” But as to the *lessons* to be read in the church, they are not only arbitrarily appointed, but (as may appear presently) of *popish* appointment too. But how came our author here so much to prefer (or indeed even to mention) their *distinguishing excellence and peculiar advantage as means of better edification*, in this case, after what the dissenting gentleman had said? “ I might (says he †) have expostulated with “ you largely on your reading, as parts of your publick “ worship, the fabulous and gross *legends* of *Bell and the Dragon*;

* Dissenter guided, p. 90.

† Plain reasons, &c. p. 8. 9.

‡ Lett. 2. p. 60. 61.

“ *Dragon*; of *Judith* and *Susannah*; and above all, the
 “ *magical romance* of receiving a fair virgin from the in-
 “ chantments of her *infernal lover*, and conjuring away
 “ the *amorous* devil *Asmodeus*, by the fumes of a fish’s liver.
 “ —Is it for the honour of the *Christian* name, think you,
 “ Sir, to have such *spurious and idle tales* read solemnly in
 “ our churches, (if *solemnly* they can be read) and made
 “ parts of our publick worship? What will an *unbeliever*
 “ think, when present at such worship! When he sees
 “ *such things* not only bound up with the holy scriptures,
 “ but commanded to be read as such in the order of the
 “ common prayer! Will it not heighten his contempt of
 “ the *credulity* of believers, and establish his prejudices a-
 “ gainst the history, the miracles, and doctrines of CHRIST.”

Now, what says Mr. *White* to this? Why nothing ex-
 cept it be this *, That “ if the reading of certain *apocryphal*
 “ chapters gives him offence, it is only *keeping from prayers*
 “ three or four week-days in the year, when it is a hundred
 “ to one if he would have been there, although canonical
 “ lessons can be read in the room of them.”

This he speaks concerning the *laity*: and to excuse
 ‘em it may be said, (not to make quite so much odds as our
 author does) ‘Tis ten to one whether the honest illiterate
 man bears in his mind the particular days in which he *may*
 go,—and when he *should* stay away: Nay; or whether
 their careful and painful *pastor* cares much whether he comes
 to worship on the week-days or not, so that he does but
 acknowledge that he belongs to the church.

Our author much extols † *the humble posture of kneeling* as
 a great help to devotion in publick prayer, and condemns
 the dissenting ministers for encouraging *standing* in their as-
 semblies, tho’ they kneel at their private devotions. To
 this the dissenting gentleman answers, by asking him,
 “ † How came you to know what their posture of worship
 “ *always* is in PRIVATE? Have they taken you into their
 “ *closets*, &c. ||?” And further says, “ As to their *fami-*
 “ *lies* and *churches*, tho’ I have been present *at prayers* in a
 “ great number of both, (which you, I presume, Sir, never
 “ have been) I assure you, I never once saw nor heard any
 E 2 “ thing

* *White*, p. 24. †. p. 21. 92. ‡ Lett. 2. p. 19. 20. 21.
 22. 23. || Note, our author has not here, *always* in *private*,
 as it seems he told the gentleman; but instead of it, *commonly* in
family-prayer. Lo! how he would be hid in the *dark*, because
 he cannot stand up boldly and speak for himself, or make good
 his charges or assertions.

“ thing like the *impositions* you mention. In their family-
 “ devotions some *stand*, and some *kneel*, according as their
 “ inclination and convenience serves. And in their publick
 “ *assemblies*, many kneel to prayer, I believe, the whole
 “ kingdom over, without it ever entering into the
 “ thoughts of their *fellow-worshippers*, to take the least of-
 “ fence thereat.”

The gentleman notes, and says to our author, “ You do
 “ not pretend to say, that either CHRIST or *his apostles*,
 “ ever enjoined, or constantly, or mostly, used *kneeling* at
 “ at publick prayer; you mention several instances from
 “ scripture, where *standing* was the posture of some of the
 “ *most solemn* addresses to almighty God.—The *primitive*
 “ Christians, it is acknowledged on all hands, *every* Lord’s
 “ day, and at all other times betwixt *Easter* and *Whitsun-*
 “ *tide*, universally prayed *standing* and *never* kneeled at their
 “ publick devotions. (Consequently, by the way, not at
 “ the Lord’s supper.) “ *Die Dominico nefas ducimus, &c.*
 “ says *Tertullian*: On the Lord’s day we account it a sin to
 “ worship kneeling; which custom we also observe from *Ea-*
 “ *ster* to *Whitsuntide*.—With all this evidence glaring
 “ full in your face, Sir, you have the assurance, shall I call
 “ it, or does it deserve some other name, very smartly to
 “ reprehend us for *standing* at our publick prayers; and to
 “ call it a *debasement* of our worship—that *kneeling* is a
 “ more humble and honourable posture—much more expres-
 “ sive of our profound reverence of God—a great improve-
 “ ment of publick worship, and that it adds a natural beauty
 “ and splendor to it.—Surprisingly enthusiastic! What
 “ *Abraham* and *Moses*, and *Samuel*, and *Nehemiah*, and all
 “ the *priests* and *Jewish people*, debase the divine worship,
 “ when they stood before God, and made their solemn ad-
 “ dresses to him! Yea, what Christ himself too debase
 “ it, by directing men to *stand* praying!”

Surprisingly enthusiastic! says the gentleman; and I add,
 surprisingly strange too, that our author should in this tract,
 and in this particular insist on the very same things (only
 a little alter’d as might best fit his purpose) when he had
 been so notably baffled in ’em by the *Dissenter* before, and
 to send it forth as a most masterly piece, but tending to no-
 thing so much as to deceive the hearts of the simple!

The next thing our author insists upon under the head of
 their peculiar advantages for the increase of piety and devoti-
 on * is, “ the copiousness and comprehensiveness of their li-

s.

“ turgy

“ *lurgy* in comparison with the prayers of dissenting ministers——It would (says he) take up a great deal of paper barely to set down, in the fewest words *I could contrive* to do it, the particular things that are the matter of our prayers, in only the ordinary morning-service of the Lord’s day. But if you have a *curiosity* to see it, you find it done, although *imperfectly*, in my *first letter to a gentleman dissenting from the church of England*. The tenth part of the things prayed for in our churches every Lord’s day, set off, as your ordinary way is, with many words, and some repetitions, will be sufficient matter for one of your prayers*.

As to the *Lord’s prayer*, he says†, the minister’s *not using* it is a *sight* and *disrespect* to it. And ‡ “ I know you are greatly prejudiced against all forms of prayer, &c.” In answer to all this, I shall say, as I find it has been long ago observ’d, That || “ the *liturgy* is (*now*) another thing than can be found among the *antients*. Is it not clear, that in the 3^d century, they had no *directory* or book to pray by? —— We look up to heaven with our hands stretched forth, as being innocent and bare-headed as not *asham’d* to make our prayers *sine more*, without a directory, as coming from the free motion of our own heart §.

“ *Platina* tells us, that in *Celestine’s* time there was no other parts of mass, but the reading of the epistles and gospels, which was *anno* 435 **.”

“ *Justin Martyr*, in the second century, fully sheweth the manner of Christian service in his time.——“ The antient Christians (saith he) had their meetings on the Sunday, they began with prayers for the church, especially for the enlightened, which were baptiz’d; then the writings of the apostles are read, as time permits; then a sermon unto the people, to exhort them all unto the imitation of the best things; then all do *rise up*, and *pour forth* their prayers again——††:” and adds, “ After this is a gathering of alms.” And, p. 7. “ He who instructed the people pray’d according to his ability. Here was no *liturgy* or common prayers mention’d.”

And it seems from hence pretty clear also, that they did not usually *kneel* at their prayers in publick, but *rose up* to *pour forth* their prayers with the greatest devotion and fervency.

But

* See Bp. *Wilkin’s* gift of prayer, p. 11. 12. † *White* p. 46.

‡ p. 87. || *De Laune’s* plea, p. 40. 41. § *Tertul. apol.* 9. c. 30.

** In *Celift.* 1. †† *Apol.* 2.

But *Walafrid Strabo*, who wrote in the 9th century, saith in his book *De rebus ecclesiæ*——“ All which is done now
 “ with a multitude of prayers, lessons, songs and consecrations,
 “ which the apostles and those who next followed them,
 “ did with prayers and remembrance of the Lord's sufferings,
 “ even as he commanded.”

“ *Socrates* saith, that among all the Christians in that
 “ age *, scarce two were to be found that us'd the same
 “ words in prayer.”

“ Pope *Gregory* the first made a new form of service,
 “ which they call the *mass*, and did add many ceremonies
 “ that were not in use before: so that *Platina* saith, *The*
 “ whole institution of the mass was invented by him, we in
 “ England had ours from *Gregory*, who by his minister
 “ *Austin* first founded the church, and introduced most of the
 “ rites, service and ceremonies.”

“ There was another *mass*, which was called the *mass* of
 “ *Ambrose*, a ridiculous thing, which they afterwards fa-
 “ ther'd upon him different from *Gregory's*, whereof we
 “ read in after-times, and there was great contention
 “ which *mass* should be received into the churches.
 “ Which when pope *Adrian* (who was anno 796) saw,
 “ he was put to his shifts, and said he would refer it to the
 “ will of God, whether he would by any sign approve the
 “ *mass* of *Gregory*, or of *Ambrose*. So these two books
 “ were laid together upon the altar, in *St. Peter's* church,
 “ and he called upon God to shew which of the two he ap-
 “ prov'd; the doors were shut all night, and the next
 “ morning when they return'd into the church, the book
 “ of *Ambrose* was found lying as it was laid down, and the
 “ other was all torn and dispersed thro' the church. The
 “ pope maketh the comment, that the *mass* of *Ambrose* should
 “ lie untouch'd, and the *mass* of *Gregory* should be used
 “ through the world; and so he did authorise and command,
 “ that it should be used in all churches and chapels, which
 “ *Charles* the great did second; commanding that only
 “ to be used, and *Ambrose's* to be burnt.”

Now this being the corrupt and ridiculous original of the
 church-service as 'tis us'd in the church of England †, and
 there is no word of God to support it, the Dissenters can't
 in their consciences comply with it, notwithstanding our au-
 thor magnifies it so much above *their* prayers; the *liturgy*
 being so copious, that barely to set down in the fewest words
 he

* *Socrates's* hist. lib. v. ch. 21. † *De Laune's* plea, p. 31, &c.
 and 45. &c.

he could *contrive* the particular things that are the matter of their prayers in their ordinary morning-service; (and they too use *some repetitions* with their *many words*, as well as * the Dissenters) would take up such a *deal of paper*, as he says, this perhaps may be one reason why their sermons are commonly so short. We, for our parts, don't envy them as to these their privileges, but desire they may reap all the spiritual advantages the *copiousness* of their prayers can yield them, but why must the Dissenters manner of worship, which is so agreeable to the antient pattern above remark'd, be such an eye-sore to them? Neither do we envy the reputation our author, perhaps, may have gained by his *contrivance* in setting down those particulars, tho', as he says, *imperfectly*. How that was, I can't tell, but I observe, the *dissenting gentleman* did not think it worth while to take any notice of it; and if any should imagine the reason of that might be, because he could not answer him in that point, to quash any such thoughts, and show you 'tis noways likely *that* was the case, do but read the gentleman's letters, and with a little consideration compare 'em with *this tract* of our author, and you will clearly see that Mr. *White* is vastly worsted in argument, for want of *truth* on his side, and can by no means make out his title-page, nor *plausible* propositions and reasoning upon them, and consequently can never prove the Dissenters are schismatics, otherwise than by *misrepresentation* †, *defamation*, &c. which the gentleman proves upon him ‡. The gentleman did not pretend to answer all his *ramblings* from the *true point*, but laboured much to bring him to it, but could not ||.

There have been many exceptions taken, or objections made against the book of *common prayer*, even by churchmen themselves, and even of late, but the *church of England* it appears are averse to any alterations, and you may see the confusions they run into, by this imposition of the liturgy, even in the *London magazine* for February 1750 **. The querist begins thus, *Candor unmask'd: — or the authors of free and candid disquisitions relating to the church of England, examined upon interrogatories.*

The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. — Of this sort are they which creep into houses, &c. Speaking evil of dignities, and of things which they understand not. —

“ Sir,

* Plain reasons, p. 13. † Lett. 1. p. 4. ‡ Postscript, p. 69. 70. || Lett. 2. p. 19.—86. 87. Lett. 3. p. 44. &c.
** Magazine for Feb. 1750, p. 73.—76.

“ Sir, I humbly suppose, there are but *very few* of the
 “ of the clergy or laity of the *church of England*, who are
 “ not ready to allow, (with its famous champion and de-
 “ fender Dr. *Rogers*) that there are *some things* in its *liturgy*,
 “ &c. which may be altered for *the better* ; or, who would
 “ *now-a-days* object to the alterations, additions, &c. pro-
 “ posed to have been made in the year 1689, (if the fury of
 “ the times had then admitted it) according to the plan
 “ before designed by Archbishop *Sancroft*, and of which we
 “ have accounts in Bishop *Burnet*’s history of his own times,
 “ (——and in Archbishop *Wake*’s speech at *Sacheverel*’s
 “ trial :)——Provided, that the making *even those inno-*
 “ *cent* alterations should not be found likely (by causing a
 “ new schism in favour of the unaltered liturgy, or the like)
 “ to be the cause of more hurt than good ; as the former
 “ of those prelates candidly allows would have been the
 “ case, had they taken place in the aforesaid year ; and at-
 “ tributes it to an *especial* providence, that they were then
 “ prevented.”——

’Tis likely, as this querist supposes, that the making of
 such alterations in the common prayer-book as the disqui-
 sitors had proposed, might indeed cause a new schism, and
 do more harm than good ; the Dissenters then, I think,
 are happy as they stand at present, being deliver’d from this
Babel all the while they keep close to the rules of the gospel,
 not praying by book at all, but *with the spirit and with the*
understanding also. And now for the sake of those who are
prejudiced against the Dissenters *extemporary or free prayer*,
 who cannot comply with their *forms*, which were compos-
 ed by men of a former generation, and are rigorously impos-
 ed on the present generation, and which, it seems, may not
 be alter’d by any who will be reputed *churchmen* ; and, in
 particular, to shew you that those dissenting ministers who
 do not use the Lord’s prayer *as a form*, do not therefore put
 any *slight upon it*, but on the contrary, do highly value it,
 and almost continually make that use of it which was intend-
 ed by our Saviour ; I must beg your patience whilst I inlarge
 something further on this topic, it being a point of great ne-
 cessity for men to be enlightened in, and satisfied concern-
 ing.

Dr. *Rogers* says *, “ The matter indeed of the prayers
 “ we join in is a subject of much higher consideration——
 “ We are first and chiefly concern’d to be satisfied that ’tis
 “ lawful : ”

* Persuasive, &c. p. 31. 32. 33.

“ lawful : ” *i. e.* the matter of the liturgy ; which point he takes for granted ; and then says,

“ In the way of worship which you choose, the propriety of the matter, and the decency of the expression in the prayers you join in, are left wholly to the discretion of your minister. In whatever prayers he offers, you are bound implicitly to follow him. I would not reflect on the parts and abilities of your teachers, &c.

What he adds is very candid and ingenuous, but I must omit it. Only what he speaks as to *forms* of prayer, that you yourselves are as much confined to a form in your prayers as we are, tho’ not always to the same form ; for you are confined to pray in the words of your minister, and no other.”

The argument of this was so well taken off, by a bishop of their own church (*viz.* Bp. *Wilkins*) near a hundred years ago, that I can’t well omit what he says upon this head : he says, touching the gift of prayer *, “ That there are two extrems that make men defective in this gift. Confining themselves wholly to set forms. Depending wholly upon sudden suggestions. Unto those (says he) that err in the first kind, I would suggest these considerations :

“ First, by way of concession : as for those *weaker Christians* and *new converts*, who have not their hearts enlarged with an ability to express their own wants and desires, ’tis both lawful and convenient for *such* to help themselves, not only in their *families*, but even in their secret performance of this duty, by the use of some good book, or prescribed form, *until* by farther endeavour and experience they may attain unto some measure of this gift. ——— ’Tis not *essential* unto the nature of prayer, that it be either read, or rehearsed by memory, or by immediate and sudden suggestion. ———

“ But now in the second place, for *any one* so to set down with his book-prayer, or some prescript † form, as to go no farther, this were still to remain in his infancy, and not to grow up in his new nature : ——— what one says of *counsel* to be had from books, may be fitly applied to *this prayer by book* ; that ’tis commonly of itself, something flat and dead, floating for the most

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part

* Gift of prayer, p. 9. 10. &c. † What then must we think of those who so much extol their forms as our author Mr. *White* has done ?

“ part too much in *generalities* *, and not *particular* enough for each several occasion. There is not that * life and vigour in it, to *engage the affections*, as when it proceeds *immediately* from the soul itself, and is the natural expression of those particulars, whereof we are most sensible.”

“ And if it be a fault not to strive and labour after this gift, much more it is to jeer † and despise it by the name of *extempory prayer*, and praying *by the spirit*; which expressions (as they are frequently used by some men by way of reproach) are for the most part a sign of a profane heart, and such as are altogether strangers from the power and comfort of this duty.”

And then there follows immediately Mr. Rogers's argument or objection, and the bishop's answer to it, viz.

“ Whereas 'tis commonly objected by some, that they cannot so well join in an unknown form †, with which they are not beforehand acquainted. I answer, that's an inconsiderate objection, and does oppose all kind of forms that are not publicly prescribed. As a man may in his judgment assent unto any divine *truth* delivered in a *sermon*, which he never heard before; so may he join in his *affections* unto any holy *desire*, a *prayer*, which he never heard before. If he who is the mouth of the rest, shall through imprudence deliver that which we cannot approve of, God does not look upon it as *our prayer*, if our desires do not say *amen* to it.

“ If it be again objected, that this ability of praying *without* book, may perhaps be fit for ministers, and such as are of more eminent learning and knowledge, but it is not to be expected from others.

“ I answer, 'tis true, such persons are more especially concerned in this *gift*, and 'tis the greater fault and shame for *them* to be without it; but yet *others* are not exempted || from labouring after it, *no more* than they are from the occasions, or need of it, or performing the duty.”

This

* Let our author well note this. † Note, there were some such persons then. † If the minister's extempory prayer must be counted a form to the people, we will not contend about words; 'tis sufficient their consent is no more required to any thing they can't approve, than they are to any thing that offends in the liturgy.

|| But do not they who magnify forms--exempt, or, at least, greatly

This puts me in mind of a passage I have met with from a Dissenter * in commendation of the said bishop in his answer to Mr. Lowth, " That Bishop *Wilkins* much commended *conceived* prayer our author cannot deny. His excellent book on the subject will be a lasting proof of the good opinion he had of that way of addressing to God; and tho' there are some things in it against their notion, who would have conceiv'd prayer to be an *immediate effusion* of the spirit, yet it is evident that the design of his writing on that argument was to recommend the gift of prayer, as that which ought to be labour'd after by all *Christians*, and more especially by *ministers*. That reverend *prelate*, I know, *conform'd* to the *liturgy* himself, and was deservedly advanced to a high station in the church; and perhaps took pains to bring over others to *conformity*; but his *piety* and *love of peace*, his *moderation* and *charity* cannot be enough commended; and were all the divines of the church of *England* of his *excellent spirit*, I believe our differences would be of no long continuance."

'Twas with delight I transcribed this passage, because it shews there may be *charity* where there is not a strict *unity*, and also how the Dissenters can rejoice to find good things and good men in the church of *England*, and how ready and glad they would be to return and unite with the church, as they are invited, were not the terms of their communion *unlawful* for them to accept of. And now,

As to the *Lord's prayer*, Dr. *Burkitt* says, " it is both a perfect form of prayer which ought to be used by us, and also a pattern and platform according to which all our prayers ought to be framed." But does not the design of our Lord in giving his disciples this prayer for a *pattern* contradict its being given as a precise form? and also does not the practice of the church of *England* in adding this to the rest of their prayers, which they reckon are so *copious* and full, contradict his design, which was to exclude all *vain* and needless repetitions?

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ly hinder the common people from striving after it? Nay, do not multitudes of their communicants by reason thereof, think they have nothing to do to labour after this gift of praying by the spirit at all? Their prayers are ready made for 'em, and were so long before they were born, and with these they are content.

* *Norman's* defence of the remarks on a sermon preached by Mr. *Lowth*, B. D. at *Petersfield*, 1724, p. 103. 104.

titions? For if the Lord's prayer *as a form* is to be added to all our other prayers, that must of necessity lengthen, and not shorten our prayers. I conclude therefore, if Christ intended this should be used as a *complete form of prayer*, then it was to be the whole of their prayers; but if this as a *form* does not comprehend all the petitions and thanksgivings, which we are in duty bound to offer to God, then our Lord never intended it as a *form*, but as a *platform* and *directory* for prayer, giving *liberty* to use *these very words*, or any other of like signification as the person praying might be enabled and assisted to do by the *holy spirit* *, and using his own endeavours withal.

'Tis plain it could not be intended as a form, so as to use those very words and syllables and no other, because the evangelists themselves, *viz.* St. *Matth.* chap. vi. and St. *Luke* chap. xi. differ in their expressions; and 'tis this, if any thing can do it, must justify the church of *England* clergy for the alteration which they have made in it, in which they vary from both the evangelists in these expressions, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* For the evangelists both agree in this, that we are to ask forgiveness of our *debts* or *sins* against God, *as we forgive our debtors*; or, as *Luke's* words are, *For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.* They are not then to be excused by saying, that the words they use are of the same or like signification; for if they take it for a *perfect form*, then the words and syllables must not in a *jot* or *tittle* be varied, for that destroys the very notion of its being used as a form: nor is this all, for there is a great difference between *debts* and *trespasses* as they are applied to men. A trespass, 'tis true, is a sin or an offence given †, and such as may be given when the offender does not stand indebted to the injured person in any *pecuniary* way: but a debt, properly taken, is something that is borrowed, or due, or which is taken away craftily from another, for which in justice he is bound to make restitution, or at least, something that another has in justice a demand upon him for: and so it is taken, *Matth.* xviii. 24. to the end. How then could the learned clergy make this change and alteration in this prayer, both in words and sense, and yet pretend to use it as a form, in obedience to Christ, as if they were the *very words* which he had given to his disciples to be so used? And besides,

Dr.

* See *Burkitt* on *Rom.* viii. 26. † *Matth.* xviii. 15. 21. *Luke* xvii. 3. 4.

Dr. Burkitt, who allows this to be a *platform*—of prayer—when upon that *plan* he draws up a *form* which he says is the *sense* and *signification* of this *best of prayers*, he nevertheless puts in of his own, “O thou (*our father*) in Jesus Christ—knowing that thy holiness and justice doth oblige thee to punish sin, and sinners, we plead with thee, for the sake of thy son’s satisfaction, to *forgive us our daily trespasses, &c.*” Now if such a liberty may be allowed as to put in such material things, of which there is no manner of intimation in our Saviour’s words, what does this make of this *best of prayers*? So far from being a perfect form, that it is not in itself *alone*, a full and perfect direction or platform for prayer, at least not to Christians since the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ, whatever it was to the disciples to whom it was first given.

Those Dissenters therefore which do not use the Lord’s prayer *as a form*, do not therefore put any *slight upon it*. Burkitt says, *If any of us think meanly of our Lord’s prayer, O how meanly may he think of us, and of our prayers?* True, indeed; but ’tis no sign of our thinking meanly of it, because we would take it in its true sense and meaning; and this we think we do when we use it as a *pattern*, a *platform*, or as a directory for prayer, not excluding the use of any other scriptures, which afford us likewise abundance of matter for prayer: *and scripture phrase for expression* (as Bp. Wilkins says in his preface to his *gift of prayer*) *no man need be ashamed to imitate or borrow*. We think we have good reason to believe that our Lord did not intend it as a *form* to his disciples, and therefore not as such to Christians afterwards, because we have not one instance in the New Testament, that ever they made use of it, tho’ we have an account of other their prayers, and particularly in *Acts* iv. 24.—30. we have this full account of that *effectual prayer* of the apostles and those of *their own company*, which (v. 31.) *when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness*. Now this was the *form*, and these were the expressions which they used in that prayer:

“LORD, thou art GOD which hast made heaven
 “and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who
 “by the mouth of thy servant *David* hast said, Why did
 “the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?
 “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were ga-
 “thered

“thered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.
 “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou
 “hast anointed, both *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, with the
 “*Gentiles*, and the people of *Israel* were gathered together,
 “for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determin-
 “ed before to be done. And now, LORD, behold their
 “threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all
 “boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth
 “thine hand to heal: and that signs and wonders may be
 “done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.”

Now this being their full and perfect prayer, to which we can't find they added the Lord's prayer, why must the Christians now be obliged to do it? 'tis said indeed, because our Lord says, *Luke xi. 2. When ye pray, say, Our father, &c.* But this enjoins it upon us as much at all times when we pray as at any one time: but is it rational to believe that no prayer would be acceptable to God at any time if this were omitted? And if so, why did the apostles omit it here? and how came *this prayer* of theirs to be so successful?

St. *Luke* records it indeed, *Say, Our father, &c.* But we ought to allow St. *Matthew's* words as opening and explaining of this (as also in the commission of our Lord, *Matth. xxviii. 19.* and *Luke xxiv. 47.* the latter must be compared, opened and enlarged by the former) for as *Matthew* had wrote his gospel before *Luke*, 'twas not so needful he should so much enlarge upon every particular. Now in this case, if it be allowed that St. *Luke's* phrase may be explain'd by St. *Matthew*, it will appear plain that our Lord did not intend this as a *form* of prayer, but only as a *platform*, &c; for thus it is, *Matth. vi. 9. AFTER THIS MANNER therefore pray ye: Our Father, &c.* And its being said, pray thus, or say, no more shews that those very words must be used (and not others of like import) than that they were to do the same also in preaching: for, when Christ at first sent forth his apostles to preach, he likewise tells them *what* they should say, viz. (*Matth. x. 7.*) *And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This was the doctrine they were to preach, but sure they were not to be confin'd to the use of these very words: no; *Burkitt* says upon it, “The doctrine they are enjoined to preach (is) namely,
 “that *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; that is, that the
 “promised *Messias* was come, and had set up his kingdom
 “in the world, and expected their obedience to his laws.”
 'Tis expressly said also, *Matth. iv. 17.* that *Jesus began to preach*

preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. But sure none can be so weak as to imagine that he confin'd himself to these *very words*. No; for 'tis said, *v. 23.* he went about all *Galilee*, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom: and the three following chapters show the excellency of his doctrine, and with what power and *authority he taught*. I shall add but one text more, which may shew us how *St. Paul* also preached the kingdom of heaven; *Acts xxviii. 30. 31.* *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.* And now

Though what I have said in this particular might be, to considerate persons, sufficient to shew that our Lord did not intend this prayer as a *form*, and especially, not as a *form* to be used in those *very words*, and not otherwise, by all Christians to the end of the world, (and which also will shew how unfitly *Dr. Burkitt* did put into it Christ's satisfaction, &c.) I shall add one thing more: We read, *John xvi. 24.* *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name:* now if 'tis necessary for us to pray in the name of Christ, and to plead his satisfaction, how then did the disciples observe this? Nay, by these words it appears they had not observ'd it, and yet he does not reprove them for any neglect of their duty in it; from whence we may well conclude, that Christ did not *then* give the disciples any direction to pray in his name, and consequently it was never design'd to be a *complete form* to be used in all succeeding ages, seeing it was deficient in this point. How then could *Burkitt* pretend to put Christ's satisfaction, &c. into this prayer, which neither the disciples nor our Saviour understood to be there! Let us hear his own exposition upon this place.

“ *Hitherto* (says he)——that is *explicitly and expressly*
 “ in my name, or by me *as mediator* betwixt God and
 “ man, and with *respect to my merits*. Do this *after my*
 “ death, resurrection, and intercession at the right hand of
 “ God, and you shall receive such answers as will fill you
 “ with joy——Hence is the encouragement, *Whatever*
 “ *ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*” But
 what is all this to the present purpose? Is it not plain from
 hence that he had no authority to put Christ's merits, &c.
 into that prayer, (taking it as a stinted form) as pretending
 it arose from thence, when here he owns nothing had been
 asked in Christ's name explicitly, as he was mediator, nor
 should

should be till after his death, resurrection, ascension, &c. ? And does not this also shew that our application to God now in the name of Christ, is not by virtue of the words and expressions which are explicitly contained in the Lord's prayer—but it arises from some other and further direction of Christ, which is here expressly given, *John* xvi. 23. 24. 25. and yet this is not design'd to exclude the direction of any other places of scripture, which may be useful to us in this great and necessary duty of prayer.

Since then it so plainly appears, that *whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning*, and that the holy scriptures (in many parts of it, and not excluding any—) are helps and assistances to Christians in prayer, as well as the Lord's prayer itself, (tho' we freely allow that to be the principal of all outward helps) and that that which conducts us in it is the spirit of God itself, as both Bp. *Wilkins*, and after him Dr. *Burkitt*, (on *Rom.* viii. 26.) allow and urge. Therefore,

The Dissenters who endeavour to walk by these rules, *praying in the Holy Ghost*, &c. are not only justified in their not using this prayer *as a form*, because they dare not make any additions or alterations in it, but use it as they believe Christ our Lord intended it should be used, and esteem it as he would have it should be esteemed ; therefore, I say, the Dissenters are not to be looked upon as *slighters* and *contemners* of the Lord's prayer ; but rather they are to be commended, as shewing a greater regard and more value for it, (because they would keep it in its due place) than even the clergy of the church of *England* itself.

But then, if it can't be prov'd by scripture, that the Lord's prayer itself was ever design'd to be used as a *form*, but rather the contrary seems apparent, how much less reason still must there be for the imposition of *liturgies*, and *forms* of prayers of mens devising, one upon another ? By what right are they imposed ? If by virtue of the XXth article of the church of *England*, enough has been said of that before ; and so I dismiss this subject.

What has been said is very sufficient to justify the Dissenters in general, and shews they are not guilty of schism in their peaceably leaving the church, and joining themselves to those churches of the Dissenters which they believe are constituted more agreeable to the will of God and the primitive pattern ; yet I have not quite done with our author, but must advance one step further ; but shall reserve that for the Second Part.

PART

P A R T II.

Containing some further weighty reasons for the Baptists separation (in particular) from the communion of the church of England.

O U R author urges it as one great reason why the Dissenters ought not to separate from the church, because, † *supposing our reasons really are sufficient to enforce our separation, they are, most if not all of them, equally good, and sufficient to justify our separation from our own churches, or to oblige us to it.* And further he pretends ‡ we should *divide and subdivide* amongst ourselves, to see if a church might not be formed that has *no defects at all* in it. “ This (he says) would be acting agreeable to your own principle. But then what a ridiculous light would this shew it in? Such a light as ought to make you ashamed of it.” Yes! but this is the dexterity of our author, to father on the Dissenters that which *they* will not own; and therefore he may take his own *perversion* to himself, and be ashamed of it; for what Dissenters are they which say, they separate for *less defective ways of worship*, and not for such as are *essential*? And does he not condemn himself when he adds immediately, “ Indeed, any one would think you don’t believe it yourselves, and really are ashamed of it, by your *scarce ever* acting according to it, in respect of of your own churches?” Might not this then have been sufficient to have stopt his flights in forming this *ridiculous* perversion?

I am of his mind when he says we should not separate || for *opinions of lesser moment*, and am pleas’d with his *confession*, “ If the church errs in fundamentals, or in points necessary to salvation, exacting of its members declarations or practices conformable thereto, they will be then excusable, if they withdraw from it.” And so, as we

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† Mr. White’s Prot. Dissenter guided, &c. p. 9. ‡ p. 44. 45.
|| p. 31. 32. 33.

take it, the case exactly stands between the church and the dissenters. But here again he is injurious to the Dissenters (according to his usual method) in charging those things upon 'em, (and giving that as their *opinions*, and as the *reasons* of their separation) which, as *Dissenters*, they disown.

For supposing there may be some too rigid among 'em, as to some *speculative opinions*, (as well as there are weaklings) how does this effect the whole body of the Dissenters? Might not this, think you, with as much reason, be retorted on the church and clergy? But I forbear.

'Tis well known that the Dissenters do separate, not only from the church, but one from another also so far, (as in charity we ought to think) and no farther than they in their own consciences believe they ought to do. And is not this right?

Thus you know the Baptist churches separate from others, and they believe they ought to do it even for this one point of *baptism*, notwithstanding our author calls this an * *opinion not fundamental*. He owns *baptism* itself is a *fundamental*, but hopes it will not be said, that the time and manner of baptizing, as to dipping or pouring on of water are so too.

But had not our author seen Mr. Stennett? Sure he must, for he quotes him as we shall see presently; but how could he read him, and yet hope that the Baptists did not, or would not hold their opinion in that point as a fundamental? But

He says, " 'Tis very certain, the primitive Christians did not account so of them, (*i. e.* of the *time* and *manner* of baptism) nor think them points of such moment, as that they should be made a wall of partition and all church-communion was to be broken for them."

The best part of the primitive church, however, (during the time of the apostles) speak the Baptists sense in this case; or else let our author shew us that there was ever *one* infant baptized in that golden age, or that was admitted to the Lord's supper without *baptism*; *i. e.* before he or she had been first *dipped* in water: for the Baptists insist upon it by the authority of scripture, and from the confession of your own doctors, that baptism in that age, was always perform'd by dipping. And Dr. Whitby, on Rom. vi. 3. says, " It was religiously observed by all Christians for thirteen centuries, and approved by our church; and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the author of its institution, or any licence from any council of the church,

* *Ibid.* p. 37. 38.

“ church, being that which the *Romanist* still urgeth to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity ; it were to be wished that *this custom* might be of general use.”

’Tis no good excuse, indeed, for the *Romanists* to say, Why may not we make an *alteration* in one ordinance, as well as you do in another, and take away the cup from the *common people*, since you yourselves do not scruple to *change* the ordinance of baptism, and take an infant instead of a believer, and instead of dipping, which only is true baptism, use only *sprinkling* or pouring on of water : but this, however, plainly shews that this change and alteration in baptism, strongly tends to carry the church of *England* back to *Rome* again. For as the *dissenting gentleman* well observes *,

“ The church is CHRIST’s kingdom : a kingdom not of this world : for his voluntary humiliation and suffering of death, he is advanced to the high honour of being *sole* lawgiver, judge, and sovereign in religious matters.—

“ He only hath authority to fix the *terms of communion* for his followers or church ; and the terms which *he* has fix’d, no man upon earth, nor body of men, have authority to set aside, to *alter*, or new-make. And if any men upon earth shall presume to alter, or new-make, *terms of communion* in his church, they are guilty of great arrogance, and invade his authority and throne. But this, we apprehend, is what *you* have done. You will not now receive a person to publick baptism or the Lord’s supper upon the terms on which *Christ* and *his apostles* would have received him. Neither *Christ* nor *his apostles* ever made the sign of the cross, or other *sponsor’s* besides the parents, necessary to a child’s baptism ; nor did they ever make kneeling a necessary term of receiving the sacramental supper ; but both those *you* make necessary. Thus you have taken upon you to new-model the church of *Christ*, to change and set aside *his* laws, and to make *others* in their room.”

Strong reasoning, no doubt, this is, and beyond the power of those new law-makers solidly to answer : but I am sorry, I must say, they may retort and evade the argument as the *Papists* do, and will do upon them both, because the dissenting gentleman takes for granted that by the laws of *Christ*, infants are to be baptized, and that, tho’ *others* are not, yet the parents are to be sponsors for them ; all which needs proof : and if infant-baptism is not

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* The dissenting gentleman’s answer to the Reverend Mr. *White’s* three letters. Lett. 1. p. 16. 17.

contain'd in our only rule of faith, then is this as much an innovation, or an invading of Christ's authority and throne, as is either the *sign of the cross* or other sponfors; nay, 'tis something more; for these are only adjuncts, or ceremonies of mens invention (which I confess is bad enough) added to the ordinance: but the *change* both of the *subject* and the *manner* of baptizing destroys its very essence.

Sorry, I say, I am to see how much the arguments of the Dissenters, when they give reasons for their non-conformity and separation, is weakened, by those of 'em who retain pædo-baptism. Tho' I readily own there are *sufficient reasons* to justify our nonconformity besides this, (as I have before fully shown) yet the allowance of any one *tradition* much lessens the force of the argument, tho' the thing itself be true: whereas on the Baptists principle this gentleman's argument had been unanswerable.

Thus the author of Plain Reasons, because he allows of infant-baptism, is deficient in his argument, as I might shew you by many instances, but let these two suffice.

In answer to the objection of a churchman*, *the prayers of the church weretcomposed by wise and learned men, that better knew the work and nature of prayer than we do.* He answers, "How great, or wise, or learned the composers were, we matter not; for tho' they were apostles, or angels of God, if they bring us any rules of *faith* or *practice* that have not the stamp of the *wisdom* and *authority* of JESUS Christ upon them; we cannot, we dare not receive them." And again,

"† The charge of JESUS CHRIST to his disciples is, Go, teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. And to such a practice, and to no other, he hath affix'd the promise of his presence with his ministers, and his churches, *Matth. xxviii. 20. Lo, I am with you, always, to the end of the world.*" How forcible would such reasonings and arguments as these be, if they themselves were not intangled with this human invention? But now

What does our author mean by the *primitive Christians* not accounting *these* to be *points of such moment*, and that *we have accordingly, no article concerning either of them in the creeds of the antient church*? What are those creeds? Does he mean the three creeds of which he speaks, ‡ and says, that the church of England more effectually provides for the furtherance

* Plain Reasons, printed 1719, p. 13. † *Ibid.* p. 28. ‡ Protestant dissenter guided, p. 82.

ance of holiness, and the increase of devotion in its members, than the dissenting churches have done, partly by means of the three creeds, one or other of which (he says) we constantly use in divine service? (Or if he means any others, 'tis alike to me.)

There is but *one* of these creeds that says any thing about baptism, for that called the apostles creed wholly omits it) and all that *that* says is this, " I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins." But our creed (which is truly apostolical) is contained in the New Testament, and there 'tis plain the subjects of baptism are only believers and penitents, not infants; and that the manner of it was dipping, and not sprinkling or pouring a little water on the face or other part of the body.

And as to the *Athanasian* creed, how much it conduces to godliness, or to the *preserving of the true faith*, &c. See the dissenting gentleman's answer*, who says, " Amongst the *peculiar excellencies of your church* you reckon the use of the *three creeds* in publick worship; as one of the most effectual and powerful means both for teaching and preserving the Christian faith entire and uncorrupt, which we have not in our churches." " The *creed* called the *apostles*, we have in constant use amongst us: and as for the *two other*, especially the *Athanasian*, we are content you should have the honour of its being *peculiar* to yourselves. But methinks, Sir, it should a little check your triumph over us here, to remember, that some of the wisest and most illustrious members of your church, both clergy and laity, account the use of *this creed* your great sin and reproach, and with Abp. Tillotson, wish you were well rid of it."

" What are you, Sir, amongst the *weak and uncharitable* minds who *damn to the pit of hell* all who cannot receive all the dark and *mysterious* points set forth in that creed! Do you in your conscience think that there is NO SALVATION for those who do not faithfully believe the several articles it contains; and that *whosoever doth not keep whole and undefiled the faith therein deliver'd, he shall WITHOUT DOUBT perish everlastingly*? What! the many great and worthy persons, bright ornaments of your own church, who instead of *keeping it whole and undefiled*, have openly disavow'd, preach'd and wrote against it, dying in this disbelief, have they *without peradventure everlastingly perished*? Alas! for the good Doctors

" Clarke,

* Lett. 7. p. 37. 38. 39.

“ *Clarke, Whitby, Burnet, &c.*——For the illustrious Sir
 “ *Isaac, &c. &c.* Yea, alas! for the whole *Greek church*,
 “ who have strenuously rejected the article of the *filioq*;
 “ ——They are gone down, it seems, to the *infernal pit*!
 “ And notwithstanding their great knowledge and piety in
 “ this world, are, for not believing the *Athanasian creed*,
 “ sunk into EVERLASTING DARKNESS and DAMNATI-
 “ ON in the other! Do you wonder Deism prevails, if
 “ this be genuine Christianity?

“ ’Tis a fact, I presume, indisputable, that a great part
 “ of the most learned and virtuous of your clergy are depart-
 “ ed from the *Athanasian doctrine*; and that those of them
 “ who are not, do by no means think its belief *absolutely*
 “ and *indispensably* necessary to salvation. What now must
 “ a *Deist* think, when he hears both the one and the other
 “ *thirteen times a-year*, most solemnly declaring in the pre-
 “ sence of *almighty God*, and as instructors of his people,
 “ *that whoever will be saved, it is before all things necessary*
 “ *that he hold the ATHANASIAN faith*; and most *peremp-*
 “ *torily denouncing* EVERLASTING DAMNATION upon
 “ those who *do not believe it*; that is, many of them de-
 “ nouncing DAMNATION upon *themselves*! —— Is this
 “ your *powerful and effectual means of preserving the Chris-*
 “ *tian faith*? —— I should think it one of the *most ef-*
 “ *fectual* to subvert and destroy it. It has, no doubt, been
 “ in fact, a great stumbling-block * in the way of *Infidels*
 “ and *Jews*; and *hardened them* in their opposition to the
 “ *religion of CHRIST*, when they see it dooming to *un-*
 “ *doubted and everlasting* perdition all who do not heartily
 “ and sincerely believe (for that must be meant by *faithfully*)
 “ these deep and mysterious points, which we acknowledge
 “ to be inexplicable, and far above the powers of reason to
 “ comprehend.”

“ But our author goes on, and says †, “ Even some of
 “ the confessions of our modern *Anabaptists* do not assert
 “ them (*i. e. time and manner of baptizing*) as funda-
 “ mentals, but plainly otherwise. In the reign of King
 “ *William and Queen Mary*, one party of them set forth
 “ a confession of their faith; and they declare they did it
 “ *to manifest their consent with the Presbyterians, Indepen-*
 “ *dents, and other Protestants in all the fundamental articles*
 “ *of Christian religion*. Which is (says he) a plain demon-
 “ stration, that they did not esteem either adult baptism
 “ or

* See *White's Dissenter guided*, &c. p. 18. † *Ibid.* p. 38.
 39.

“ or dipping to be in the number of fundamentals. And
 “ if they really thought them such, they would scarcely, I
 “ think, allow us, who were baptized in infancy, and only
 “ with *pouring* on of water, to be Christians, and our
 “ churches to be true churches. Yet they do; and take it
 “ extremely ill (Mr. *Stennett* in particular does) if any
 “ one reproach them with thinking otherwise of *us*, than
 “ as fellow Christians, or *with judging none to be of the true*
 “ *church, but those of their own way.*”

To shew you the integrity of this gentleman in his citations, do but turn to Mr. *Stennett*'s answer to *Ruffen*, p. 23. 215. (the places which he refers to) and you will find this to be our author's perversion of *Stennett*'s words and sense. For what *Stennett* says (p. 215.) is this: “ Enough
 “ has been said before to take off the second reproach *he*
 “ casts on them, (the *Anabaptists* as *Ruffen* call'd 'em) viz.
 “ *that they judge none of the true church, but those of their*
 “ *own way*; and the contrary of what Mr. *Ruffen* here lays
 “ to their charge is so well known by those who are ac-
 “ quainted with them, that it would be superfluous to add
 “ any thing more under this head.” By which 'tis plain that those words which our author particularly remarks, are not *Stennett*'s, but his antagonist *Ruffen*'s words, cast on the Baptists by way of reproach, and to which *Stennett*'s answer was in p. 22. 23. where he shews that Mr. *Ruffen* charges 'em also with being *contrary to all*; for thus he writes, “ We shall afterwards see how he proves the Ana-
 “ baptists a people of so black a character, as is here suggest-
 “ ed. When he says, *they are contrary to all, as all are*
 “ *contrary to them*, I suppose he means in respect of their
 “ *principles and opinions*, (of which he is speaking just before,
 “ under the name of heresies.) This is no great discovery;
 “ for if others are contrary to them, they must be *contrary*
 “ to others: but their being contrary to others no more
 “ proves them in the wrong, than the contrariety of others
 “ to them is a proof those others are in the right.

“ They differ indeed from others, as others differ from
 “ them; and if this be to be contrary to all, Mr. *Ruffen*
 “ himself is so, for he most certainly differs as much from
 “ other men, as they differ from him: and if this be
 “ thought a part of the bad character of the Anabaptists, it
 “ will as well fit any other party of men, and the church to
 “ which Mr. *Ruffen* belongs, (for instance) for she differs
 “ from all, as all differ from her in some respects; and no
 “ party professing Christianity, differs from her in all.”

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Observe here that Mr. Stennett allows a *difference in principle and opinion* between the church of *England* and the Baptists; and what that difference is, is plain enough from the whole tenor of his book, or what did Mr. *Russen* and he contend about? Was it about things merely indifferent? No; 'tis plain it was not; for he makes dipping of adult persons upon a profession of their own faith essential to true baptism; and his intention was, to shew, in the behalf of the Baptists, (and which I believe they in general approve) that they have a universal charity for all: for thus he adds immediately:

“ If we mean they are contrary to all others, and all
 “ others to them in point of charity, so that they can't
 “ look upon those that differ from them as Christians, nor
 “ they that differ from them look upon them as such: the
 “ the contrary of what is said is well known; tho' they
 “ differ from *other* Christians, they are no enemies to them,
 “ but profess to love all who love our Lord Jesus Christ:
 “ nay, after his example, to love their enemies, and they
 “ are well persuaded of the same sentiments of many other
 “ Christians towards 'em; for all are not so contrary to
 “ 'em as our author, who will not allow 'em the name of
 “ Christians.”

Now this being Mr. Stennett's answer, 'tis plain what he allows is, that persons of different sentiments in religion may nevertheless be Christians, if they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; (and consequently they may be of the *invisible* church of Christ, and of the number of the saved) but he never meant to say, as our author would perversely make him say, that those who were in infancy baptized (as they call it, but) only by or with pouring on of water, are nevertheless true churches of Christ, if by the Church he means the true *visible* church, as the Baptists do, agreeable to his own principles and the nineteenth article of the church of *England*; for his own principle or *definition* of the church (as he declar'd to the dissenting gentleman) is this: “ The
 “ Catholic church is one *outward* and *visible* society divinely
 “ ly instituted; the most admirable and glorious society
 “ under heaven.” And if it be so, (as the gentleman well observes) “ then the *terms of admission* into this society and
 “ the *qualification of its members* are *divinely fixed*, *i. e.*
 “ fixed by the *will and authority of God*: whatever visible
 “ society then hath its terms of admission and the qualifications
 “ of its members NOT divinely fix'd, fix'd only by the will
 “ and authority of men, cannot be the truly *Catholic* and
 Christian

“*Christian church.*” And the nineteenth article of the church of *England* says, “The *visible church* is a congregation of faithful men, met together to worship God, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be *duly* ministred, according to CHRIST’s ordinance in ALL those things that of necessity are *requisite* to the same.” Other Dissenters observe, that baptism in the church of *England* is not duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance, by reason of the additions they have made to it*, but the Baptists say, they have chang’d the ordinance, both as to the right subject and due manner, so that as they practise it, ’tis *another thing* than that which Christ instituted, or his apostles practised; and therefore as Mr. Stennett was in the same principles, and so well pleaded their cause, I say, *this* must needs be a gross perversion of Stennett’s words; for in another place he says †, as it were, inculcating the argument of his book, “I hope by this time the impartial reader will believe the Anabaptists adhere so *strictly* to *immersion* and *adult-baptism*, from a better principle than that of mere obstinacy; and that Mr. *Russen* has no just pretence to the vogue of the universal church in this controversy.” But then how could Mr. *White* say, that tho’ baptism itself is a fundamental, yet he hoped we would not say, that the *time* and *manner* was so too; and especially how could he pretend Mr. Stennett yielded up the cause, in behalf of *himself*, and in the *name of all*, in manner as he has express’d it? For certainly he yielded up the cause, if he allow’d sprinkling, or pouring water on an infant to be true scripture-baptism, or agreeable to the nineteenth article of the church of *England*, or even to the acknowledgement of the vulgar catechism itself, which says, that repentance and faith *are required* of persons to be baptized; and that infants by reason of their tender age cannot perform them: which reduceth this their practice to a mere human invention. And if such as these can constitute a church, yet can it be (think you) a church or *visible society* *divinely instituted*, according to our author’s own definition? Whatever our author may think, I am satisfied Mr. Stennett did not think so.

And since our author (by reason of Mr. Stennett’s modesty and charity) took occasion to pervert his words and sense, and would make you believe (if you are not careful) that that those are Stennett’s words, which indeed were *Russen’s*, this makes me mistrust him as to what he says, of the con-

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* Plain Reasons, p. 6. 14. 15. † Answer to *Russen*, p. 189.

feſſion of faith, which *one party of them* (the *Anabaptiſts*, as he calls them) *ſet forth* in King *William* and Queen *Mary's* reign ; 'tis likely indeed they intended to ſhew *how far* they did agree with other Chriſtians in all the fundamental articles of religion, meaning chiefly articles of *faith* ; and not of *practice*, or however, not with reſpect to this of baptiſm ; for if they agreed with others in this point, why did they pretend to differ ? and this certainly they did, or how ſhould Mr. *White* know 'twas one party of *them* ? But to explain this, I find there was a confeſſion of faith ſet forth about that time (in 1689) by *above an hundred* congregations of Baptiſts met in a *general aſſembly* ; and they ſay *, “ That
 “ being met together to conſider of ſome things that might
 “ be for the glory of God, and the good of theſe congrega-
 “ tions, have thought meet, for the *ſatisfaction* of all other
 “ *Chriſtians*, that differ from us in the point of baptiſm,
 “ to recommend to their peruſal the *confeſſion of our faith*,
 “ which confeſſion we own, as containing the doctrine of
 “ *our faith and practice*.” Now here we have the advantage of Mr. *White* as to the number of the congregations, however, and now as to the argument.

In that confeſſion “ of the church” they ſay, “ 1. That
 “ the Catholic or univerſal church, which with reſpect to
 “ the *internal* work of the ſpirit and truth of grace, may be
 “ called *inviſible*, conſiſts of the whole number of the elect
 “ that have been, are, or ſhall be gathered together into
 “ one under *Chriſt* the head thereof ; and is the ſpouſe, the
 “ body, the fullneſs of him that filleth all in all.

“ 2. All perſons throughout the world, profeſſing the faith
 “ of the goſpel, and obedience unto God by Chriſt accord-
 “ ing unto it, not deſtroying their own profeſſion by any
 “ errors, everting the foundation, or unholineſs of conver-
 “ ſation, are, and may be called, *viſible* ſaints, and of ſuch
 “ ought all particular congregations to be conſtituted.”
 And then they ſay, “ Of baptiſm.”

“ 1. Baptiſm is an ordinance of the New Teſtament,
 “ ordained by *Jeſus Chriſt*, to be unto the party baptized a
 “ ſign of his fellowſhip with him, in his death and reſurrec-
 “ tion ; of his being ingrafted into him ; of remiſſion of
 “ ſins ; and of his giving up unto God thro' Jeſus Chriſt,
 “ to live and walk in newneſs of life.

“ 2. Thoſe who do *aſtually* profeſs repentance towards
 “ God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,
 “ are the *only* proper ſubjects of this ordinance.

“ 3. The

* Hiſt. of *Engliſh* Baptiſts, vol. 3. p. 285.

“ 3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, *wherein* the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

“ 4. Immersion, or *dipping* of the person *in* water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.”

This is what they say of baptism, in which they do not shew an agreement, but a real difference between them and other Christians in this point, and yet they leave room for charity among Christians, as Mr. *Stennett* likewise did. And had our author minded this as he ought, he might have perceived how that a *professed* Christian may be an elect person, and belonging to the true catholic or *invisible* church of Christ; tho', unless he be duly baptized according to Christ's order and institution (which thro' tradition and ignorance he may miss of) he cannot be esteemed a member of the true *visible* church of Christ. And is not this the doctrine even of the church of *England* itself?

By this noble principle of *Christian charity* (I think) Mr. *Stennett* was led to express himself in the manner he did, which, probably, our author not being well acquainted with, led him thus to stumble at his words, and to assert that of him which was never his meaning.

It was also. (as I take it) *this principle* which led a certain author, speaking of PEACE, to say *, “ Our Saviour has bought it, prays for it, and promises it. Yes, and makes it easily attainable by all good people, tho' of *different persuasions*. 'Tis not more easy for our eyes, and hands, and feet, to keep from mutiny, than for *real* Christians to have peace among themselves. Because, as they are members of one another, so are Christ's servants: members of one another in his own mystical body, and acted by one and the self same spirit. So that an Archbishop *Usher*, and a Presbyterian Mr. *Baxter*; a Bishop *Wilkins*, and an Independent Dr. *Harrison*, do naturally love without dissimulation, as naturally as the sun does shine, or the fire burn.”

St. Paul having wished *peace to the brethren*, adds at the conclusion of his epistle to the *Ephesians* this remarkable prayer, *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. Now who will venture to affirm that none but those who are in uniformity with the true visible church in all points, can love our Lord Jesus Christ in sin-

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cerity,

* Publisher of a letter of advice to the churches of the Non-conformists.

cerity, nor be saved by him? Or is such a principle, that none can be saved out of their church, any better than a pitiful piece of popery?

Our author refers us to the last chapter of Mr. *Wall's history of infant-baptism* to shew, "that when the opinions of these men began to increase in *England*, many of them had no apprehension of any necessity of separating from the establish'd church upon those accounts, and did not proceed to it, contenting themselves with declaring against infant-baptism, reserving their children to adult baptism, and being themselves baptiz'd with it, 'till such times as the seeds of total separation were sown by *Oliver Cromwell*, to make them fitter for his turn *; and even then, many still continued in the communion of the church. Mr. *Tombes* of *Salisbury*, who writ so much against infant-baptism, was one of these. I hope there are still many who have no great prejudices against the church on any other account than *this*. And *these*, to be sure, as they may, so ought to conform." But to take off the force of all this, and of what follows, (and consequently the whole force of his reasoning with the Baptists in this tract) I must first observe that this piece of history concerning the Baptists in and before *Oliver Cromwell's* time, seems to be ill attested, for it appears in the *history of the English Baptists* †, That "anno 1615 the more moderate or orthodox Baptists published a small treatise ‡, wherein they endeavour'd to justify their separation from the church of *England*, and to prove, that every man has a right to judge for himself in matters of religion; and that to persecute any on that account, is illegal and antichristian, contrary to the laws of God, as well as to several declarations of the king's majesty. They also asserted their opinion concerning baptism, and shew the invalidity of that baptism which was administered either in the establish'd church, or among the other Dissenters, and clear themselves of several errors unjustly cast upon them. It appears to be written, or at least approved of, by the whole body of Baptists who then remained in *England*; because at the end of the preface they subscribe themselves Christ's unworthy ministers, and his majesty's faithful subjects, commonly, but most falsely, called Anabaptists."

And in the year 1618 there was a book published against infant-baptism, containing the same sentiments which the Baptists

* Prot. Dissenter guided, p. 40. 41. † Vol. 1. p. 124.

‡ Hist. Purit. vol. 2. p. 49. || Hist. English Bapt. vol. 1. p. 128. 129.

Baptists now have of that unscriptural practice. And then,

Our author's insinuation, that *Oliver Cromwell* was the occasion of a *total separation*, is not consistent with the account given by Capt. *Richard Dean* * in his letter to Dr. *Barlow*, Bishop of *Lincoln*, who having spoken of the great increase of the Baptists in the year 1649, says, "that in that time, did this opinion spread itself also into some of the regiments of the horse and foot in the army; — and I have cause to believe, one special reason of *disbanding* one entire regiment in the Earl of *Essex's* army, was, for that the colonel entertained and gave countenance to *Separatists* and some *anabaptists*. And that which occasioned *Oliver Cromwell*, after he usurped the government of Lord Protector, to *discharge* at once all the principal officers of his own regiment upon *other pretences*, was for that they were all *Anabaptists*." Now how does this agree with our author's account? How came he to disband or discharge those officers for being *Anabaptists*, if they by being so (and maintaining such a separation——) were thereby fitter for his turn?

And as for Mr. *Tombes* who writ so much against infant-baptism, I find the following account of him †: That he had very early scruples in his mind touching infant-baptism; for when he was lecturer at *Magdalene-hall* in *Oxford*, in 1627, being led by those lectures to examine this point, he discover'd the insufficiency of the most common arguments for it, and rested wholly on 1 *Cor.* vii. 14. *Else were your children, &c.*

"But when he was at *Bristol*, he met with an ingenious Baptist, who, in a dispute with him, did so fully answer his argument from that only text, as put him to a stand. He would not rashly ‡ and all at once, cast off an opinion and practice so universally received; and yet, as a man that durst not oppose the truth, whoever brought it, he resolved to consider the matter more fully."

"So when he came to *London*, by reading *Vossius's Thesis de Pædobaptismo*, he found that in point of antiquity the matter was not so clear as he had taken it to be. He found also that *Camararius*, *Musculus*, *Melancton*, and *Beza*, were all of the opinion, and prove by good arguments

* *Hist. of English Baptists*, vol. 2. p. 2. 4. 5. † *Ibid.* vol. 1. p. 278.—291. ‡ This was my own experience; I did not leave the church, and deny this practice, but upon deliberation, and a thorough search.

“ ments that 1 *Cor.* vii. 14. must be expounded of legiti-
 “ mation according to the apostle’s true meaning; and so
 “ he became satisfied that *infant-baptism* was without any
 “ real foundation, either from scripture or antiquity.

“ Yet he still resolved to consult the most learned of his
 “ brethren, and there was a meeting of the *London* mini-
 “ sters in 1643——and the question proposed was, What
 “ scripture there was for *infant-baptism*? Mr. *Tombes*
 “ told ’em, he doubted there was none——The whole is-
 “ sued without any satisfaction to Mr. *Tombes*; and he com-
 “ plain’d that several of them did afterwards misrepresent
 “ him, as to what then passed.

“ The *assembly* of divines were now sitting at *Westmin-*
 “ *ster*, and had declared, that their design was to reform
 “ religion in *England* and *Scotland*, according to the word
 “ of God, and the example of the best reformed churches.
 “ And Mr. *Tombes* was also informed, by one of that *assem-*
 “ *bly*, that they had appointed a *committee* to consider the
 “ point of *infant-baptism*.

“ Whereupon he drew up, in *Latin*, the chief reasons of
 “ his doubting the lawfulness of that practice, and sent them
 “ to Mr. *Whittaker* the chairman of that *committee*; hoping
 “ that an *assembly* of such grave and learned *divines* would
 “ either answer the scruples of a *brother* in the ministry;
 “ or, if they appeared to be justly founded, that they would
 “ according to their professions and covenant, endeavour to
 “ reform this abuse of the *ordinance* of *baptism*.

“ He waited many months, but could get no answer, or
 “ hear that the point was so much as admitted to a debate in
 “ the *assembly*. Instead of that, he found that some of the
 “ *assembly*, both by *sermons* and *pamphlets*, endeavoured to
 “ render odious to the people those that should deny *baptism*
 “ to *infants*; that they passed a vote, tending to explode,
 “ if not censure, any that should but dispute against it;
 “ and that instead of considering his arguments impartially,
 “ his papers were tossed up and down from one to another,
 “ in order to expose him.”

He was now *minister* of *Fenchurch* in *London*, but his *sti-*
pend was taken away, for not practising the *baptism* of *in-*
*fant*s; yet the honourable societies of the *temple* wanting a
 preacher, he was admitted on condition that he should not
 meddle with the controversy of *infant-baptism*; and they
 promised that no one should preach it up in his pulpit.

“ After this, the people of *Bewdly* in *Worcestershire*,
 “ the town of his nativity, chose him for their minister.

“ And

“ And now he began to preach and dispute publickly against *infant-baptism*, and to put his opinion into practice, being baptized by *immersion*, on a personal profession of faith. And seeing no prospect of any reformation in the established church in this *point*, he there gathered a *separate* church of those of his own *persuasion*, continuing at the same time minister of the parish.— — —

“ After this, in the year 1653, he was chose one of the tryers (who were to examine the qualifications of those who were admitted to the ministry.) And among other good effects that followed hereupon, this was one, *viz.* the commissioners agreed to own the *Baptists* as their *brethren*, and that if any such applied to them for probation, and appeared in other respects to be duly qualified, they should not be rejected for holding this *opinion*. And hence it came to pass, that at the *restoration* several parishes were found to have *Baptist* ministers fixed in them. — — —”

“ Upon the restoration of King *Charles II.* he readily fell in with *monarchical* government, and writ a treatise the same year to justify and encourage the taking the oath of *supremacy*. But a little after, when he found the spirit of *persecution* again revived, and the former government and *ceremonies of the church imposed*, he not only quitted his places, but laid down the ministry also.”

I thought proper to give you this short history of Mr. *Tombes*, because our author lays such a stress upon it, that he and others at that time, continued in the communion of the church, and did not make a total separation. But are not the times greatly alter'd? Would they now allow *Baptist* ministers to have cures and hold benefices in the church, and to set up *separate* meetings, and propagate their own opinions, as Mr. *Tombes* did, and yet own 'em as their *brethren*? No; according to Mr. *White*, they must either conform to what he calls *ministerial conformity*, or else come to church in the quality of laymen; which, if they had not some secular advantage in preaching, he thinks, they would soon do. But this instance of Mr. *Tombes* (as far as that will go) shows the contrary; for, tho' he did indeed conform to the church as a *lay-communicant* after the *ceremonies* were imposed, yet in his judgment he continued as much a *Baptist* as ever; nor could he be prevailed upon to accept any benefice or dignity in the church, though it was offered to him by such as were able to have preferred him very high.

His

His great care to find out the truth, and when he had found it, not to conceal it, but so faithfully to practise it, and persuade others to it, as he had opportunity, is both admirable and imitable : 'tis, to be sure, every man's duty to do the like ; but how rare is the practice ! But

Did the *assembly of divines* act an honourable part with him, or agreeable to their pretensions ? Did not something intervene to hinder that full reformation of religion which they had proposed, perhaps as *John xii. 42. 43.* ? And was not Mr. *Tombes* noble in his confessing of Christ ? He was not afraid of being put out of the synagogue, for he put himself out in not accepting any benefice. But

I would let our author know, that the Baptists don't take Mr. *Tombes* (tho' they highly commend his integrity and faithfulness) nor any other man or men for their guides, *i. e.* (I mean) lords and masters of their faith : in this case they own no other lord but CHRIST. To what purpose is it then for him to tell us that when the opinions of these men began to increase in *England*, many of them had *no apprehension* of any necessity of separating from the established church, upon those accounts, &c. ? He must needs know, I think, that the Dissenters in general give sufficient reasons for their separation from the church ; and if what has been said already be not sufficient to shew that the Baptists in particular have a further weighty reason to separate on the account of their corruption of the ordinance of baptism, I have yet further to add.

As our author has cited Mr. *Wall*, I would let you know that Dr. *Gale* has fully answer'd him, so far as it relates to this controversy, and to our present purpose speaks at large in his second letter ; and he speaks the general sense of the Baptists, both as to our separation on the account of baptism, and also as to charity towards other Christians who differ from us in that point ; for he shews *, “ That the qualifications which make a true Christian, and which constitute
“ a true church, are different. The fundamentals of
“ Christianity may be found in a single man, but a single
“ man can't have all the essentials of a church : and farther, a body of men may be *good Christians*, orthodox in
“ all fundamentals, and yet not able to form themselves
“ into a church.” Here he instances in the parliament, &c. which he supposes are good Christians, yet can't form themselves into a church. “ But (says he) tho' to be right
“ in the essentials of a church is not a fundamental of religion,

* Reflections on Mr. *Wall*'s lett. 2. p. 62. — 80.

“ligion ; yet to be right in the fundamentals of religion, is
 “a necessary article of a true church ;——I speak of a particular *visible* church, not of the universal *invisible* one,
 “which, perhaps, has no other essentials than the necessary
 “articles of the Christian religion ; for every true Christian is a member of the Catholick church, tho’ he should
 “happen not to be in communion with any visible one.”

And in the same letter, “ ’Tis strange men can exclaim
 “against schism, (and God knows the sin is black enough)
 “and at the same time know in their consciences, they prefer their humours and opinions about external indifferent
 “matters, before the important concern of the peace and
 “edification of the church.——” And again,

“All prescriptions in the church are of no force, and unlawful, when contrary to any which JESUS CHRIST, our
 “great legislator, has ordain’d ; or when she exceeds the
 “lawful bounds of her power. And therefore, even those
 “who can allow the church is possess’d of a legislative power
 “in matters purely indifferent, and are willing to suppose,
 “that her members are oblig’d to comply with her ; infer
 “notwithstanding, that if those things, which are indifferent in themselves, are circumstantiated, as it often
 “happens, so as to destroy any of our LORD’s precepts,
 “we are discharg’d from obedience to our subordinate ecclesiastical governors, and such her decrees are *ipso facto*
 “void.——”

“Peace and unity are strictly enjoin’d, and should be
 “the particular care of those whom *the Holy Ghost has made overseers of the flock* ; and yet some* men deliberately and with pleasure study inflexibly to maintain and impose those things, which they know by experience confound the unity they preach, and should preserve. ’Tis
 “a chief part of their office, with tenderness, to instruct and *relieve* the consciences of the people ; but *they*, on the
 “contrary, oppress and perplex ’em, beyond what they are able to bear. Is this agreeable to charity, thus deliberately to *constrain* us to what they count a sin, and against
 “which themselves pronounce damnation ? *Divisions, schisms, separations, and whatsoever breaks the unity of the church, are plac’d, they say, by St. Paul in the roll or*
 “catalogue he gives of the sins which are certainly damning ; which they that practise shall not inherit the kingdom of God, *Gal. v. 19. 20. 21.* † And notwithstanding
 I standing

* See here who they are that cause divisions, &c. † Mr. White also cites the following texts, (p. 12.—15.) to the same purpose

“ standing this, they are so far from helping us to avoid the
 “ danger, that they wilfully lay the *unnecessary* stumbling-
 “ blocks before us, which they are assur’d will, and do
 “ make us fall, in direct opposition to the apostle’s counsel
 “ and pattern, who says, (1 Cor. viii. 9. Rom. xiv. 15.
 “ 1 Cor. viii. 12. 13.) *But when ye sin so against the bre-*
 “ *thren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against*
 “ *Christ. Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I*
 “ *will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my*
 “ *brother to offend.* How vastly different from this tender
 “ regard and consideration of the infirmities of others, and
 “ of how different an original is the inflexible temper of
 “ some *now-a-days*, who rather than part with any thing
 “ they have once receiv’d, will indanger the salvation of
 “ those who can’t subscribe to it, even tho’ it should prove
 “ the eternal ruin of thousands for whom Christ died? And
 “ whereas Mr. *White* says * tho’ baptism is a fundamen-
 “ tal, yet he hopes ’twill not be so said of the time and man-
 “ ner of it; “ I’ll present you with *our* notion of the point
 “ (*and answer in Dr. Gale’s words.*)

“ When our Lord sent out his disciples to preach, and in-
 “ stituted the holy ordinance of baptism, he commanded,
 “ that all persons should be first taught to believe in him,
 “ and then be admitted into his church and covenant, by
 “ being dipt into the water, *in the name of the FATHER,*
 “ *and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.* None there-
 “ fore can be true members of the Christian church the a-
 “ postles were then sent forth to gather, unless they are ac-
 “ cordingly first taught, and afterwards regularly received,
 “ according to our LORD’s direction, by dipping ’em into
 “ the water, and pronouncing that sacred form of words
 “ he prescribed.

“ Whatever it may be in his || opinion, ’tis a fundamental
 “ with *us* in the constitution of a church: and if he can
 “ think, the true subject, and the just manner of admini-
 “ string the ordinance, are not of its essence, but wholly
 “ indifferent, and what there is no need to be curious in; I
 “ assure you, *we* are of another mind; and have more re-
 “ verence

pose—1 Cor. i. 10. Phil. ii. 2. Rom. xv. 5. 6. 1 John iv. 1. 1 Tim.
 iv. 1. Acts xx. 30. Tit. iii. 10. Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Thess. iii. 14. Heb.
 xiii. 17. 1 Tim. i. 9. 10. 11. and does not omit to charge it on the
Dissenters that *they* are the presumptuous violaters of the constitution,
 discipline, and order of God’s holy church, and must expect to
 be judged and punished with everlasting destruction for it, citing also
 2 Thess. i. 8.

* P. 38. || Mr. *Wall*’s or Mr. *White*’s either.

“ verence for our LORD’s institutions, than to esteem the
 “ due performance of ’em so light a thing. ’Tis of im-
 “ portant consequence, *we think*, to retain his methods
 “ punctually, and not deviate in the least particular: for
 “ ’tis highly suitable to the nature of things, to believe, as my
 “ Lord Bishop of Sarum judiciously observes*, *That our*
 “ SAVIOUR, *who has instituted the sacrament, has also ei-*
 “ *ther instituted the form of it, or given us such hints, as to*
 “ *lead us very near it.* And therefore, if it were not in re-
 “ ality a fundamental, yet while we believe it is, it has the
 “ influence of one upon our consciences, and we have the
 “ same reason to separate.

“ If the church has a greater latitude, I appeal to you,
 “ Sir, which is most expedient and just; that she should
 “ close the rupture, by yielding to the tenderness of our
 “ consciences, and give up what she esteems so very indif-
 “ ferent; or that we who are not so at liberty, should act
 “ against our consciences, and comply with her?

“ But I will endeavour to prove, Sir, that what we di-
 “ vide for, is a fundamental; and without the help of a
 “ supposition, that the establish’d church is possibly in the
 “ error. To cut this short (for I would fain have done
 “ with this subject) I will not give the reasons our author
 “ uses here, a particular examination; they are sufficiently
 “ answer’d by the foregoing distinction, between funda-
 “ mentals of religion, and fundamentals in the constitution
 “ of a true Christian church. All he attempts to prove is,
 “ that it is not a fundamental article of faith, *without which*
 “ *none can be saved*; which is nothing to the purpose: for,
 “ as I shew’d above, there are other causes which not only
 “ justify, but also *necessitate* a separation from a church.
 “ Besides, he can never evince this negative from his own
 “ principles. He owns baptism itself is a fundamental; and
 “ would be understood, certainly, to mean true Christian
 “ baptism, and not every invention of hereticks in antient
 “ or modern times: he must comprehend, then, all that is
 “ essential to true baptism, or else ’twill be imperfect; and
 “ if these suppos’d circumstances should be found to be of its
 “ essence, it will follow from himself, that these things are
 “ fundamentals, as being essential to what is allowed to
 “ be so.

“ Baptism, I grant, is of great necessity; and tho’ I dare
 “ fix no limits to the infinite goodness and mercy of God,
 “ which I am confident he will give mighty proofs of, in

“ great instances of kindness towards *all sincere*, tho’ mis-
 “ taken men; however the gospel-rule is, according to the
 “ doctrine of the apostle, to *repent and be baptized, for the*
 “ *remission of sins*. We should be very cautious therefore of
 “ making any change in these things, lest we deprive our-
 “ selves, thro’ our presumption of that title to pardon, with-
 “ out which there is no salvation. But Mr. *Wall* confesses
 “ this; and, I think, ’tis as clear, that nothing can be
 “ Christian-baptism which varies from CHRIST’S institu-
 “ on. That only is baptism which he appointed, and
 “ therefore that which differs from what he appointed,
 “ differs from baptism; and to bring in alterations is to
 “ change the thing, and make it not the same, but another.
 “ This is self-evident, and beyond a question.———

“ And since to the very being of baptism, a subject to
 “ whom it must be administer’d is necessary, and a mode
 “ of administering, without which it wou’d be only a notion
 “ in the brain; these things, therefore, are as necessary as
 “ baptism itself. And hence it follows, that the true sub-
 “ jects, which are profess’d *believers* only, and the true
 “ mode, which is only *dipping* into the water, are necessary
 “ to true baptism; and consequently a difference in these
 “ points is a difference in fundamentals, and so by Mr.
 “ *Wall*’s concession a just cause of separation.”

“ Mr. *Wall* calls our way * of *dipping*, the *old scripture*
way, and plain truth, which all our fathers in this island
practised till few years ago. And again, “ How large a
 “ signification soever the word βαπτίζω may have, to signi-
 “ fy *washing* in general; ’tis plain that the ordinary and
 “ general practice of St. *John*, the apostles, and primitive
 “ church was, to baptize by putting the *person into water*.”
 In another place he owns *sprinkling* to be a *novelty*, and a
scandalous innovation, and addresses himself to the *clergy* to
 reform the *abuse* of the ordinance, and return to the *antient*
way of baptizing; yea, he even ridicules and banters the
 manner of some in their practice of sprinkling, as if they
 thought a *tea spoon* would hold water enough for the pur-
 pose, &c. But what need was there of that, for if once the
antient way of *dipping*, which represents a *burial* be left,
 who knows where to stop? and why is not *a few drops*,
 or a tea spoonful as well as a large basonful poured on the
 party? Dr. *Wall* also thought that this abuse in the man-
 ner, being so palpable, was the occasion of many becoming
Antipædobaptists; and in one place says, “ I had the dis-
 advantage

* See his defence of his hist. p. 129. 403. 406. 407. &c.

“ *advantage* to plead for a *way* of baptism of which the *best*
 “ I could say was, that it is sufficient for the essence of bap-
 “ tism ; but *could not deny* the other to be the fittest.”

Had he not thought it to have been sufficient for the essence of baptism, he had as good as confessed that their church (for the most part however) is constituted of persons or members, wholly unbaptized.

Mr. *White* also says, “ Tho’ we do assert the *sufficiency*, I
 “ don’t say of *sprinkling*, because, I think, the church never
 “ uses that expression, but of *pouring on of water*, for *Chris-*
 “ *tian-baptism*, we do not assert it in such high terms ; and
 “ talk, as they do, of the *expediency* of it ; but are *always*
 “ *ready* (as the church has directed, and provided fonts for
 “ the purpose) to dip their children, *if they will only* certify
 “ that the children may well endure it.” But

What substance is there in this pretence, that they are so ready to dip children ? Do they ever so much as enquire of the parents, whether the child may well endure it, or no ? Nay, have not some preached and wrote, that ’twould even kill a child to dip it in cold water ? Mr. *Wall* was in the right therefore to address himself to the *clergy* for a reformation of this abuse ; for if these never consult about it nor attempt a reformation, if they never preach it to their auditories, but the contrary rather, and if they do not so much as put it to the *laity* to know their mind, how should they accept them to *certify* that their children may well endure it ? No doubt as the *clergy* are satisfied some with *sprinkling*, and others with *pouring on of water*, they are so too ; and, perhaps, afraid to have their children dip’d, unless they were taught that dipping is safe, and essential to true baptism.

After baptism in the primitive church there was another service perform’d, *viz.* The *laying on of hands*, which is reckon’d one of the *beginning principles of the doctrine of Christ*, *Heb. v. 12.—vi. 1. 2.* This our author speaks of under the name of *confirmation*, and says *, *It is laid aside in the dissenting churches.* This as ’tis practised in the church of *England*, the dissenting gentleman has well expos’d †, and I would recite his words, but that it is too long for this place, only these following : “ || *Tertullian* is the
 “ most antient author in which mention of it is found.
 “ But by his time, ’tis well known, a great variety of *superstitious* and ridiculous and foolish rites were brought in-
 “ to

* *Dissenter guided*, p. 85. † *Lett. 2.* p. 9.—14. ‡ *Lett. 3.* P. 32. 33.

“ to the church. And you are also, I presume, not ignorant that *confirmation* was then always perform’d (not as it is with us, but) *immediately after baptism.*” And again, “ As Dr. *Cave* observes, though infants were undoubtedly taken into the church by baptism, yet the *main body* of the baptized were *adult* persons ; who, flocking over daily in great numbers to the faith of *Christ*, were received in at this door. Usually they were for some *considerable* time *catechised*, and trained up in the principles of the Christian faith ; till having given testimony of their proficiency in knowledge, and of a sober and regular conversation, they became candidates for *baptism.*” Or, as a greater author says, “ The *catechumens* enjoy’d not the privileges of the *faithful* till they had, in a sense, merited them ; which was when, thro’ a *considerable* time of *trial*, they had evidenc’d the sincerity of their hearts by the sanctity and purity of their lives : and then, as *Origen* says, *we initiate them in our mysteries, when they have made a proficiency in holiness, and according to the utmost of their power have reformed their conversation.* When they had chang’d their manners, and rectified their irregular carriage, then they were washed with the *water of baptism*, and not before. For as *Tertullian* observes, we are not baptized, *that we may cease to sin ; but because we have already ceased.*” “ Now when this was the case, and immediately after baptism *confirmation* was administred, there was some *decency* and *propriety* in the bishop’s or presbyter’s (for *presbyters* also then confirm’d) addressing *almighty God* as having *vouchsafed to regenerate these his servants with water and with the Holy Ghost, and to grant them the forgiveness of all their sins.* But how different, alas ! vastly different the case at present is with the multitude, who flock to our modern confirmations ! How *rude* and *unserious* they rush to receive this *episcopal* grace ! In how perfunctory and slight a manner the ceremony is perform’d ! What riot and disorder frequently concludes the day ! — is too obvious to the world ; and would seem, perhaps, *invidious* if set in its proper light.”

Our author, however, is mistaken when he says, Confirmation (or *laying on of hands*) is laid aside in the dissenting churches : for ’tis still religiously observ’d in most of the Baptist churches, and that immediately after baptism. And they think they have good authority to perform it in the manner which they do ; not laying any stress on the ministers hands, nor pronouncing any absolution, but with solemn prayer

prayer to God for the forgiveness of past sins, and for such a measure of the Holy Spirit (whether gifts or graces as he shall think meet to bestow, and) as we are well assured God has promised to give to those that wait upon him in his own way to receive it.

Dr. Wall has a passage concerning this, which I think proper to give you; and as our author has refer'd us to Mr. Wall's last chapter of his history of infant-baptism, to shew the unreasonableness of our separation, and wishes the *Ana-baptists* would carefully peruse, and impartially consider it. This the Baptists have done, and esteem Dr. Gale's reflections a full answer to his whole performance.

" Dr. Wall in his defence says *, concerning confirmation by the bishop: *We find few that are capable to be confirmed so soon as eleven or twelve [years of age.] They may be able to repeat the words of the catechism, or summary of the faith, and to make the answers to questions put to them, with ready and pregnant forwardness. And fond parents that are conceited of their childrens capacities, are sometimes importunate, and proud of credit, to have them admitted to the ordinance. But they really do their children a prejudice, in making them receive it so young; when it has little effect on their consciences; and thereby disabling them from ever receiving it afterwards which might else have been done to great spiritual benefit, being received with a due degree of serious consideration. A child of that age may have memory and words ready; but seldom can have due sense and conscience of the weight and concern of the thing to his soul.*

" † What I observe here is, that this is a more weighty reason against the baptizing of infants—when it can have no effect at all upon their consciences, than it is against their confirmation at eleven or twelve, or their being baptized at that age upon *their own faith*; because if baptism were administred by dipping with that solemnity which our author owns was the antient way—by a suitable profession and covenant; tho' it must be own'd to be rare—at that age; yet so solemn an action upon such a personal profession, could hardly be forgotten when they come to more maturity, and therefore would, probably, when they come to have a right understanding of their engagement, influence their minds to suitable practice: whilst to baptize infants (without scripture authority) is
" really

* Defence of his history, p. 43. This citation is from my own M. S. taken out many years since. † The reason of these ("") is, because 'tis quoted from my own M. S.

“ really to do them a prejudice, disabling them from ever receiving it afterward to their greater benefit.

“ To this end they are persuaded when they come to age, that they received baptism sufficiently in infancy : and if they should question it, and become enlighten’d by the word of God, into the *antient scripture way* ; and would desire to practise it with a *due sense and conscience of the weight and concern of the thing to their souls* ; yet they cannot do it without running the risk of becoming *Schismatics, Separatists, Anabaptists*, or whatever else their antagonists shall be pleas’d to call them. And thus is the true scripture doctrine and practice of believers baptism [and of *laying on of hands*, called *confirmation* too,] set aside and subverted, for *that* which Dr. Wall himself owns * cannot have all the solemnity which that of an adult person may have : and that which is chiefly wanting in it is a *divine* command.”

Give me leave now to cite one place more from Dr. Gale †, where he shews the necessity of baptism, and yet the charity we ought to have for those Christians which do not see it in the light which we do : but I will do it short. He says, “ I must confess I think those persons are greatly to blame, who either oppose and abolish the use of baptism, or change it for what is not baptism : but GOD, who is merciful, knows their hearts. And we have great reason to hope, others shall be saved without either faith or baptism. Those who did not know their master’s will when they might have known it, were to be beaten with few stripes ; those then who could not know it, shall doubtless receive no stripes at all, because they are, in that respect, guilty of no fault ; and none of the damn’d shall have that excuse, to plead they could not possibly escape, and are damn’d of necessity, merely for want of knowledge, which they had not the means to attain : for this would be a most unworthy reflection on the BEST and kindest of BEINGS.”

By what has been said, I think, it plainly appears, that the Baptists are fully justify’d in their separation, not only from the communion of the *church of England*, but from all sorts of Pædobaptists whatsoever, because to submit to that unscriptural practice which makes void our LORD’s own appointment, is to cast off the authority of CHRIST our only MASTER and LAWGIVER.

I

* *Ibid.* p. 404. † Gale’s reflections, lett. 11. p. 419. 420. 421.

I had intended to have shewn you this further from Mr. *Killingworth's* supplement to the sermons lately preached at *Salters-hall* against popery, but having been so large already, I must be as short as possible now, and shall therefore only refer you to the said supplement, where you may see it at large; only give me leave to cite this from p. 67. *viz.*

“ Therefore let Protestants of all denominations consider
 “ the absolute necessity there is of a thorough reformation
 “ among themselves; and that they are not left to their
 “ *own liberty, to act as they please*, in what doctrines and
 “ what ordinances to believe and observe, according to the
 “ letter of the word; and in what others they please to deviate from that rule. For one great characteristick of
 “ our being true disciples of, and friends to Christ, is, our
 “ continuing in his word, and doing whatsoever he commands. *John viii. 31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which*
 “ *believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my*
 “ *disciples indeed.* And *John xv. 9. 10. 14. As the Father*
 “ *bath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.*
 “ *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even*
 “ *as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in*
 “ *his love. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I com-*
 “ *mand you.*”

What has been said, I hope, is enough to shew that the Dissenters (and particularly the Baptists) have sufficient reasons to separate, and to continue their separation from the church till she become reformed: and now because our author, among other mischiefs, charges our separation not only as an *occasion in many instances, of the loss of truth, and peace*, but also with the utter extinction of charity amongst us; tho' I have said a pretty deal to it already, yet this being with me a worthy principle*, I shall conclude with this further recommendation of it, to professors of every denomination, in the words of a friend of ours†, which were not delivered in any heat of controversy, but speaking of the charitable man, he says, “ His charity has no limits,
 “ but like the bounty of his MAKER, extends itself to *all*
 “ *mankind.* He judges of the actions of others in the most
 “ favourable light.—’Tis not confin’d to them who are
 “ of his *own persuasion*, he judges charitably of them —”
 But, on the other hand, he says,—“ Alas! where men are
 “ not inspired, and directed by true charity, do we not find
 “ that they may be inwardly convinced of the truth of

K

“ Christianity,

* 1 Cor. xiii. Col. iii. 14. 1 Pet. iv. 8. † *Morris's* sermons on charity, &c.

“ Christianity, and entertain the hope of everlasting life ;
 “ tho’ they are so far from being kind and merciful, that
 “ they are unreasonably selfish, and cruelly refuse to do the
 “ distressed that relief, which they are able to give ? Does
 “ not this very opinion, that they are sounder in the faith
 “ than others ; and have consequently, as they imagine,
 “ a better right to the favour of GOD, too commonly
 “ throw a sour leaven into their temper, and incline them
 “ to do the most cruel things to them, who are not of their
 “ mind, things no less condemned by the Christian-institu-
 “ tion, than repugnant to the laws of natural religion.”
 And again, “ All those defects in good men, that dif-
 “ ference in opinion, which now *unjustly* lessens their
 “ esteem for one another——will then be done away,——
 “ But men of all passions ——are too apt to take up with
 “ the *external* part of religion, because it is more easy to
 “ perform that, than it is to mortify their sinful passions,
 “ and govern themselves by the pure laws of Christianity.
 “ Too many among the Papists think well of themselves,
 “ because they strictly observe the traditions of their church ;
 “ tho’ they most uncharitably censure, and most barbar-
 “ ously use those, who dissent from their communion.
 “ Too many Protestants likewise place their religion in a
 “ constant course of external worship, and ardent zeal for
 “ the tenets of their own party.——But let *us* not deceive
 “ *ourselves*. The best and purest form of religion will be
 “ of no service to us without a holy conversation.” But,
 “ If we live in love and in the practice of *all* holiness, we
 “ shall be fit for heaven and the communion of the saints
 “ above. Since the religion therefore which we profess is
 “ so holy, let us not dishonour it by a wicked life ; but
 “ adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by a truly Chris-
 “ tian temper and conduct. And if in this world, we live
 “ soberly, righteously, and godly, we may look with com-
 “ fort for *that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the*
 “ *great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ* ; and when he
 “ comes, we shall behold him with joy, and enter into his
 “ everlasting kingdom.” *Amen and Amen.*

A N

A P P E N D I X,

C O N T A I N I N G

A short, but plain and full Answer to a Pamphlet, intit'ed, *The Evidence of Infant-baptism briefly consider'd, and fairly represented, in order to justify and recommend the Practice.*

THIS author makes use of four arguments to evidence or prove the practice. His first is,
 “ Their admission into the *Jewish* church before
 “ Christ came.”

And here he cites *Gen. xvii. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14.* at large.

What this proves is, that *Abraham's* males, even *every man-child* were to be circumcised, by God's *express* command; and that this was to be the token of that covenant: but there is no *express* command, neither any example for infant-baptism in the New Testament; and 'tis *fallacious* in our author to substitute *infants* in the room and stead of *males*; for under the term *infants* is comprehended male and female, and this indeed only suited his purpose.

His second evidence is,

“ Our Lord's conduct towards them, when he came.
 “ There are (he says) two declarations of our Saviour, from
 “ whence the baptism of infants may justly be concluded.
 “ The first is, in his discourse with *Nicodemus*: where
 “ he declares that except (*John iii. 5.*) *any one* be born of
 “ water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of
 “ God.”

And this (he says) includes infants as well as adult persons. According to which doctrine, not one infant can be saved without baptism, which is a monstrous perversion of our Saviour's doctrine, who has told us, that *of such is the kingdom of God, Matth. x. 14.* tho' they were not baptized as our author himself owns, saying, (p. 10.) *Our Lord did not baptize them, for they were already members of the Jewish church.* But does our author imagine that the being baptized with water only (for infants can have no other) is (as he calls it) *baptismal regeneration?* our Lord says, *Ye must be born again;* yea, adult persons, must be born of water and of the spirit; now this infants are no more capable of than they are of believing; and which also is by our Saviour made as necessary and as universal as this, *John iii. 18. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he (any one) that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.* Now these words being spoken of the same persons, and to be as universally extended as those in v. 5. this doctrine of our author that infants *must be regenerated* and born again, cannot be true, because it would make our Saviour's words contradictions; for if he teaches that infants may be saved *by being baptized*, tho' they do not believe, it would be a plain contradiction for him afterwards to say, that none could be saved unless they did actually believe in him, yea, tho' they were baptized; but this our Lord could never be guilty of. But *Burkitt's* sense of *John iii. 3.* cuts off all manner of pretences of that kind, for thus he writes:

“ Christ here acquaints *Nicodemus*, and in him *all persons*,
 “ That there must be a change from nature to grace, before
 “ there can be a change from grace to glory;—That
 “ nothing short of the *regenerating change* would bring him
 “ to heaven.” And on v. 5. “ *Nicodemus* not rightly un-
 “ derstanding Christ's meaning in the former verse, our
 “ Saviour is pleased to explain himself in this, and tells him,
 “ That the birth he spake of, was not natural, but spiritual,
 “ wrought in the soul by the spirit of God, (*therefore not by*
 “ *water*) whose working is *like water*, cleansing and purify-
 “ ing the soul from all sinful defilement. *Learn hence*, That
 “ the regenerating change is wrought in the soul by the
 “ spirit of God, which purifies it from its natural defile-
 “ ment, and *renews* it after the divine likeness and image.
 “ *And adds*, We never understand divine truths *aright*, till
 “ Christ opens our understandings; till then, they will be

“ denied,

“ denied, nay, perhaps derided even by those that are profoundly learned.”

But our author says, “ The primitive church did always understand this rule of our Saviour to regard baptism, and did from thence establish and infer the baptism of infants.”

As the practice of the primitive church is our author’s fourth and last argument, I will defer the answer to this till I come to the consideration of that. He proceeds and says,

“ Another declaration of our Lord, which concerns infants, we have, *Mark x. 13. &c.*” He recites the words at large, and says, “ Just and rational is the * exhortation of the church of *England*, grounded on this conduct of our Saviour.” But

If our Lord, who declares the happy condition of *little children*, neither baptized them, nor gave any order so to do; ’tis altogether a begging the question to suppose from hence that infants are to be baptized. But says our author,

“ Most evident it is from this passage of scripture, that our Lord *commanded* infants to be brought unto him.

“ ’Tis as evident they cannot now any way come unto him *but* by baptism, &c.” No, nor by baptism neither, since he never bid ’em come that way: and what if they cannot come to him *now*, is it not sufficient that he has assured us, they shall come to him hereafter, and be heirs of his kingdom?

This which he calls a just and rational exhortation of the church of *England*, he gives us at large, all except the following words, which, because of his omission, I think it proper to supply: *viz.* “ Wherefore we being thus persuaded of the good-will of our heavenly Father towards *this infant*, declared by his Son Jesus Christ, and nothing doubting but that he *favourably* ALLOWETH this *charitable* work of OURS, in bringing *this infant* to his holy baptism, &c.”

Is not this a plain acknowledgment that they did not apprehend there was any plain *evidence* in scripture for infant-baptism? If there had been any such evidence, why do they call it a work of their *own*, and that they doubt not but that God *favourably alloweth* (not commandeth) it? Now if this be the case, I conclude, their hope is vain, for our Saviour says †, *In vain do they worship me, teaching*
for

* The public office of baptizing infants. † *Matth. xv. 9.*

for doctrines the commandments of men. And St. Paul, touching the worship of angels and other traditions, says *, *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility—intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind; and not holding the head,—(Touch not, taste not, handle not; which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship, &c.*

Next our author goes to the commission, *Matth. xxviii. 19. 20.* and says, “The direction runs in terms universal. “All nations are to be made Christians: *Gentiles* as well as “*Jews*; and consequently, all that belong to, and make a “nation; infants, as well as adult persons.”

’Tis true, it extends to all nations, and all those who are first taught and instructed, so that they repent of their sins and believe the gospel, on such a profession they are to be baptized, and this only is the teaching or discipline here intended; and which is evident enough from the two parallel places of † this commission. Much more might be said, and it might be demonstrated from the order of this commission, that infants are not, nor can be the subjects of baptism.

His third argument or evidence is, the conduct of the apostles.

But here also he is quite on the wrong side; for the conduct and practice of the apostles in this case, is one of the chief reasons and arguments we have against the baptism of infants: for the apostles always required repentance and faith of their hearers and proselytes, as perquisites for baptism †: and those whom they baptized were men and women who professed faith in Christ, and some of ’em had before received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and which is made an argument why no man should forbid water, but that they might and should be baptized.

The text he mentions, *Acts ii. 38. 39.* shews that the children to whom the promise was made, must first repent or be called, and then be baptized; for the term *children* does not always mean such as are infants in their non-age, but (as here) the posterity of those *Jews*, who having heard, *gladly received the word*, and so they were baptized. And on the same terms, and no other, would their children be received.

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* *Col. ii. 18. 19. 21. 22. 23.* † *Mark xvi. 15. 16. Luke xxiv. 47.* ‡ *Acts ii. 38.—viii. 12. 37.—x. 47.*

He urges also, *Acts* iii. 25. and says, "The apostle assures the *Jews*, that they were the children of the covenant, which God made with their fathers, saying unto *Abraham*, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed: and if all the families of the earth according to the tenor of the covenant were to be blessed, then the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*, and their seed were to be blessed, and accordingly to be admitted into covenant with God." Yes, and to be baptized upon their believing, and no otherwise, as is plain, *Gal.* iii. 26.—29. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. When the covenant was first made with *Abraham*, it was his seed, and not the *Gentile* nations; nor all his seed, but the males only were to have the token of the covenant, circumcision; but by Christ all distinction is taken away, and every soul, upon his believing, is to be admitted to baptism. And he himself on *Gal.* iii. 17. hath these words, which are full to the same purpose, "He (St. Paul) declares, that God would justify the heathen thro' faith; that the blessing of *Abraham* should come on the *Gentiles* thro' Jesus Christ." But how thro' Jesus Christ? no otherwise than by believing in him.

Therefore, that I may return his own words upon him, Our argument drawn from our Lord's commission, from the conduct and practice of the apostles, and indeed from the tenor of the whole New Testament,——is strong and conclusive; and tho' it may be eluded, or evaded, cannot be answer'd. But he says, "The apostle has given a plain intimation of infant-baptism, *1 Cor.* vii. 14.——Here, says he, we see, holiness is ascribed to children: but this holiness can be no other than a federal, or baptismal sanctification; whether we consider the design of the apostles, or the language of scripture."

This argument may be well answered in the words of Mr. *Killingworth*, who says *, "I shall not enter into any particular examination of the true and genuine sense of these words, but shall content myself to shew in general, that let the holiness which the apostle speaketh of be what it will, it cannot give any right to baptism; which appeareth from hence, that not only the children are said to
" be

* Supplement to sermons, p. 27. 28.

“ be made holy, but this holiness also is derived from the
 “ sanctification of the *unbelieving* party, or from the holi-
 “ ness of the unbeliever derived from the believer ; for the
 “ apostle declareth, unless the unbelieving party were sanc-
 “ tified, or made holy, by the believing, the children
 “ would not be holy : but the holiness of the unbelieving
 “ party giveth him or her no right to baptism ; and there-
 “ fore the holiness of the child, which is derived therefrom,
 “ cannot give it a *right to baptism*. For it is plain, the un-
 “ believing parents cannot derive to the child that holiness
 “ which giveth a right to baptism, because they have no
 “ such baptismal holiness themselves.”

Tho’ this answer to our author in relation to that text might be sufficient, yet upon a further view of what he urges upon it, I think proper to add, that the scope and design of the apostle shews that he meant, not their *federal holiness*, or *baptismal sanctification*, but their *legitimacy*.

So Mr. *Wilson* in his excellent scripture-manual, in which he has pointed out an experimental method of inquiry thro’ the texts of the New Testament, to those who make the word of God the rule of their faith and practice, (which work I would recommend to all who desire satisfaction in the point of baptism) has ingenuously observ’d on this text, which he concludes thus* : “ Upon the whole, I thought
 “ the affair settled by the apostle, being wholly matrimonial ; it was highly probable, the *holiness* and *uncleannefs*
 “ were of the same kind ; or related to apparent legitimacy
 “ or illegitimacy.

“ Nor could I see on the supposition of an external sort
 “ of holiness derived to an infant from a believing parent,
 “ that we are to conclude its right to baptism’ without a
 “ special direction from the lawgiver of the church.”

But our author says, “ The word is applied to, and imports *baptismal sanctification* : and in St. *Paul*’s epistles
 “ Christians are stiled saints, &c.” And here, as in many other places, he cites his *Greek* and his *Latin* ; tho’ certainly this is no great discovery : we readily allow that the epistles were directed to the saints, to them who were *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, &c. But we can’t think that those epistles were directed to infants ; and whereas he cites 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. *Eph.* v. 26. we cannot admit that infants belong to the visible church of Christ ; if we did we should allow they were sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word ; but how can they be cleansed with the washing

* Manuel, p. 29. 30.

of water by the word, when they can neither understand nor hear the word, nor is there any word of God at all for their washing? and the former place was very unwarily chosen, for the apostle having spoken of thieves, covetous, drunkards, &c. v. 9. 10. he says here, *such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, &c.*

Now what man who sets up himself to be a guide to the people, would pretend to apply this text in such a manner as to include infants? Or will it follow that because adult persons had a baptismal sanctification, when they believed and received the gospel, that therefore the same might be apply'd to infants too?

Our author says, "The apostle's first reason for the believer and the unbeliever's living together, if possible, is the happy event of such cohabitation seen in the conversion of the unbelieving party." But are not the apostle's words directly contrary to this, when giving it as the reason why the believer should peaceably and quietly let the unbeliever depart when it was their mind so to do, he says, *For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?* and yet our author speaks of it as a certain event, when it *could* not be certain, and would be the more unlikely should they make use of any rough means to constrain 'em.

"The other, or second reason, (our author says) is drawn from the happy state or condition of the children *produced by such marriages*: the children descending from such parents living in concord and union, *are baptized*: are *made holy by baptism.*"

In this, as well as in the former, he quite misses the apostle's meaning; his advice is only to the believers, (for the unbeliever would not hear it) that if they could they should live with the opposite party, because their marriage was lawful, and therefore their children would be holy, but not as *he* would have it, *as baptized, or made holy by baptism*, for that's clearly to beg the question; whereas the apostle says, *Now they are holy*; and does not say they are *made* so by baptism: he does not say that they living in *concord and union*, would agree to have them baptized, had he said so, there had been some colour of the child's deriving its holiness (in this way) as well from the unbeliever as the believer; (and then they begin to cease to be unbelievers.) But he supposes the unbeliever quite opposite to Christianity; and therefore no holiness of this kind could be deriv'd to the children, both from the

believer and unbeliever. For only suppose the man to be the believer, tho' he might have his children baptized, because he is to rule in his own house, yet his wife being opposite to it, there could be no holiness deriv'd to the child from her : but if the man were the unbeliever, he would not permit it to be.

Much more might be said to this argument, but 'tis against my proposed brevity, and therefore I shall break off concluding my answer to this and all other scripture arguments which is made use of for this practice, in the following words : ' My * sense of these arguments cannot be better expressed than in the words of Mr. Neal, with little variation : " Had our Lord, or *his apostles*, appointed it, we might expect to meet not only with the name in scripture, but with the [*express institution*] in the most plain and significant words ; or at least, that it should be read in every page of antiquity : but if the most ancient † fathers of the church consent in any thing, it is in a general silence about this matter. The whole stress of the *evidence* is therefore laid upon — *obscure* and metaphorical passages of scripture." And elsewhere, he thinks it a good argument in another case, " *That* there is not the least mention of such a *practice* in scripture." And a little lower he asks this question, " But is any thing like this recorded in the whole New Testament ?" But above all the rest, Dr. Earle best expresses my thoughts on this subject, " And here I frankly own, that all the arguments I have offered——must be given up, if it has plain scripture to support it." And " in like manner if it appear'd from plain scripture——I say, plain scripture, and not from a few dark texts, wrested to serve a turn, and which no man would have ever thought to be to the purpose, if he had not first taken the doctrine for granted.

" And this I verily believe to be the case. The *Pædobaptists* saw fit for several——considerations, to enact the belief of *infant-baptism*, and then all the wit of their ablest men was employed, to search for scriptures that might support it. Were not this the bottom of the business, could they possibly produce so many texts, that are *evidently* nothing to the purpose ?"

" In which passage, I have only substituted *Pædobaptists* instead of the *Roman church*, and *infant-baptism* in the room of *purgatory* ; and the passage, in my opinion, fits

" this

* Supplement to sermons, p. 28. 29. † By the most ancient fathers, I mean those of the two first centuries.

“ this place as well as that which it filled in the doctor’s sermon.

“ But perhaps Protestants who plead for pædobaptism, think they have a right to demand plain express texts of scripture from the Papists, and may themselves make use of dark, obscure, and metaphorical passages against the Antipædobaptists : but then this I am sure of, that if arguments from dark and obscure passages, may possibly be of force, yet the Pædobaptists arguments can be of no weight in this case, because, as Dr. Earle saith of the *Romanists* reasoning for purgatory, they are nothing to the purpose.”

Our author’s fourth and last evidence is, “ The practice of the primitive church.” And he says,

“ The practice of infant-baptism in the primitive church, will *clearly*, and *fully* appear, from the acknowledgment of *Pelagius* and *Celestius*.”

“ *Pelagius* declared, that he was slander’d, as if he deny’d the sacrament of baptism to infants, and did promise the kingdom of heaven to some persons, without the redemption of Christ.

“ That he never heard any impious heretick, who would say that of infants?

“ Again he *owns*, that no one can be so ignorant of what is read in the gospel, as even slightly to affirm it.

“ Again he thus expresses his sentiment : Who can be so wicked, as to *hinder* infants from *being born again in Christ*, and so to *miss* of the kingdom of heaven ?

“ And *Celestius* owns, that infants ought to be baptized for the remission of sins according to the rule of the universal church, and *determination* of the *gospel*.

“ Now, from this acknowledgment and confession, (*says our author*) the antiquity and universality of infant-baptism do sufficiently appear. The church could not alledge or insist on the practice, as an argument against the *Pelagians*, nor they have so freely and readily admitted it (to the ruin of their own cause and interest) if the practice had not been *early*, *constant*, and *universal* ; and *as such derived from the apostles*. And what the church hath thus faithfully received, she retains, and defends, as agreeable to the practice of the apostles, and to the will and institution of Christ.”

For this he cites as below *, which is no better than a popish

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* *Nemo vobis suscipere doctrinas alienas ; hoc ecclesia semper habuit, semper tenuit ; hoc a majorum fide accepit, hoc usq; in finem per-*

popish argument, by which, together with infant-baptism, (which they don't pretend to prove by scripture) they would maintain the rest of their popish doctrines and traditions, as the *pope's authority* or *supremacy*; the *sacrifice of the mass*, *transubstantiation*, the *use of images*, &c. to the utter ruin of the Protestant religion, if you will believe them and follow that doctrine.

And to this purpose they cite *Augustine*, saying †, “ That
 “ which the universal church doth hold, and was not in-
 “ stituted by any council, but hath been still retained in
 “ the church, this we may most justly believe to have come
 “ from no other authority, than from the apostles. ———

And again, “ This position then of St. *Augustine* is most
 “ true and consonant to the doctrine of all other fathers in
 “ that behalf, that when any thing is found generally re-
 “ ceived in the church, and no author, institutor, or begin-
 “ ning can be found thereof, this without all doubt com-
 “ eth down from the apostles. And of this position may
 “ be alledged two infallible grounds: the one of faith, the
 “ other of evident reasons. For in faith who can think so
 “ basely of Christ's power or will in performing his pro-
 “ mises made unto his church, to conserve her in all truth
 “ unto the world's end, as that he should permit her not-
 “ withstanding to admit or teach generally *any one* false
 “ article of doctrine, and much less, so many as *these men*
 “ object against us? For, whereas he promised his holy
 “ spirit to be with her unto the world's end, and that she
 “ should be the *pillar* and *firmament* of truth to direct others,
 “ and finally, that *hell-gates should never prevail against her*:
 “ How should all this be performed, if she fell into these er-
 “ rors, of which Protestants accuse her? or what greater
 “ victory could the gates of hell have against her, than that
 “ from an apostolick church, of whom Christ spake, she
 “ should become an apostatical church, as these men do call
 “ her? which is the greatest blasphemy against Christ,
 “ and his divinity, that possibly can be imagined, seeing it
 “ doth evacuate his whole incarnation, life, death, doctrine,
 “ resurrection, and other benefits of his coming, which
 “ were all employed to this end, to make unto himself a
 “ church and kingdom in this world, that should direct
 “ men

perseveranter custodit. S. August scr. to derbis Apof. p. 65. Tom.
 to Ed. Par. 1555.

† Three conversions of *England* from Paganism to Christian
 religion, part 1. c. 5. p. 106. 107. 108. Imprinted with li-
 cence, 1603.

“ men in all truth to their salvation. And this being taken
 “ away, and the other granted, that the church herself may
 “ fall into error and false doctrine; then is there no cer-
 “ tainty in any thing. And consequently it cannot be,
 “ that any erroneous doctrine should be taught or received
 “ generally by the church.”

I thought it proper to give you this argument of the Pa-
 pists at length, which Protestants retaining the practice of
 infant-baptism, upon the principle and way of arguing
 which our author uses, will not be able to answer. As to
 what he cites from *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus**, it ap-
 pears †, that many of the writings of the 2d and 3d centuries
 are lost, (and others have been corrupted since they were
 written.) But we still have part of the works of St. *Justin*
 and *Irenæus*. The pieces which Mr. *Wall* in his *history of*
infant-baptism cites from *Justin* (in which this passage of
 our author is one) were all writ after the year 150, for which
 time 'tis to be concluded, however, infant-baptism can't be
 prov'd to be known in the world: and as to this passage
 of *Justin*, which is thus englished: *Several persons among us*
of 60 and 70 years old, of both sexes, who were discipled to
Christ in their childhood; is proved to be nothing to the
 purpose ‡, the words (ἐκ παιδων) signifying not *in* but *from*
their childhood, just as 'tis said of *Timothy*, that *from a child*,
&c.

And as to the passage of *Irenæus*, their strongest hold,
 and which Mr. *Wall* confesses to be the first || express men-
 tion of infant-baptism, (which was about the year 180;) 'tis
 shown not to be express neither; the words are thus
 englished: *He came to save all persons by himself; all I mean,*
who by him are regenerated unto God, infants and little ones,
and children, and youths, and elder persons. Now 'tis shewn
 that the learned question whether this passage be genuine,
 or rather, that it seems to be undeniably spurious; that this
 is but a translation of *Irenæus*, and a very scandalous one too,
 altogether unworthy the original: but that were it allow'd
 to be genuine, *regenerated* or born again to God, did not in
 the language of those times signify to be baptized; regene-
 ration being something internal, a being renewed in the
 spirit of the mind, a kind of a new generation, and there-
 fore can't belong to infants, however, as we common-
 ly understand the word now to signify, such as are not
 capable of reason: it was before shewn, that infants
 can-

* Title page, and p. 13. † *Du Pin*, vol. 2. c. 6. p. 65.

‡ *Gale's reflections*, p. 454.---464. || *Ibid.* p. 464.---504.

cannot be regenerated in a scripture sense, and therefore whatever *Pelagius* or *Celestius* imagined that it was wicked, to hinder infants from being born again in Christ, (or keep 'em from being baptized) and so to miss of the kingdom of heaven; or whatever the fathers of the church imagined who excommunicated these two for hereticks in the fifth century, we cannot rest upon their determinations in this matter, but must rest only on the scriptures which is the religion of Protestants, and by which, if they would keep close to it, they would be able to refel all the errors of Popery, and all other errors and heresies whatsoever; but if they leave that rule, and depend on tradition, this will lead 'em to Rome directly, and to a cumbersome multitude of ceremonies, such as the offices of that church are covered with, and which, as Mr. *White* observes, is on all hands (but he must mean among Protestants) agreed to be justly offensive.

But as to *Pelagius*, if the church condemn'd him for any error that he held concerning baptism, they were certainly more in the wrong than he, for 'tis said that the third* head of his heresy was, *That there is no original sin, and that children that die without baptism are not damn'd.* Or as another expresses it †, “He deny'd original sin, and held it descended to the posterity of Adam, not by propagation, but only by imitation; from whence he concluded, that the children that dy'd unbaptized, would be saved.” Then he did not deny original sin, but he deny'd its being imputed to infants so as that they must needs be damn'd, and could not be sav'd unless they were baptized; and must this be reckoned such a monstrous error! Nay, is it not monstrous that any who are acquainted with the Christian religion should maintain, or even countenance the contrary!

I had thought to have shewn from plain scripture, in opposition to the popish argument above, that if the church do not hold the head Christ, she may be forsaken without any breach of his promise, according to that threatening, *Rev. ii. 5.* that the great numbers, and famous churches, might be so served, yet that he will still have a church, (tho' it may be obscure, hated, and despised,) which he will be with to the end of the world: and that this church hears CHRIST only; and that therefore, no traditions of the church, whatever consent they may have of fathers and doctors, ought to rule us in matters of faith and doctrine, but the word of God only, and which (being true) will ruin not only the popish cause in general, but this particular branch

* *Du Pin*, vol. 2. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 189. † Dictionary of all religions.

of it, namely, the doctrine and practice of pædobaptism. And I shall shew this, but I chuse to do it in the words of some of those who have been eminent amongst themselves.

Mr. *Hales* having observed *, that, “ The first notable
 “ *schism* in the church——being upon error, taken for ne-
 “ cessary, that an *Easter* must be kept, and upon worse than
 “ error——for it was no less than a point of *Judaism*
 “ forced upon the church, I say, thought farther necessary
 “ that the ground of the time for keeping of that feast must
 “ be the rule left by *Moses* to the *Jews*, there arose a stout
 “ question, Whether we were to celebrate with the *Jews*
 “ on the fourteenth *moon*, or the *Sunday* following? This
 “ matter, tho’ most unnecessary, most vain, yet caused as
 “ great a combustion as ever was in the church; the *west*
 “ separating and refusing communion with the *east*, for
 “ many years together. In this fantastical hurry I cannot
 “ see but all the world were *Schismaticks*, neither can any
 “ thing excuse them from that imputation, excepting only
 “ this, that we charitably suppose that all parties did
 “ what they did out of conscience, a thing which besel
 “ them through the *ignorance* of their *guides*, (for I will not
 “ say, thro’ their malice) and that through the *just judgment*
 “ of *God*, because through sloth and *blind* obedience, men
 “ examined not the things which they were taught, but,
 “ like beasts of burthen, patiently couch’d down, and in-
 “ differently underwent whatsoever their *superiors* laid upon
 “ them. By the way, by this we may plainly see the
 “ danger of our appeal to antiquity, for resolution in con-
 “ troverted points of faith, and how small relief we are to
 “ expect from thence; for, if the discretion of the chiefest
 “ guides and directors of the church did in a point so tri-
 “ vial, so inconsiderable, so mainly fail them, as not to see
 “ the truth in a subject, wherein it is the greatest marvel
 “ how they could avoid the sight of it; Can we, without
 “ the imputation of great grossness and folly, think so poor
 “ spirited persons competent judges of the questions now on
 “ foot betwixt the churches?”

But the author with which I intend to conclude is the late excellent Bp. *Jewel*, who says †,

“ ’Tis much to break *God’s* commandments, and yet
 “ bind him to his promise.—— The church is not limit-
 “ ed to place. Sometimes she is kept neat and clean, and
 “ sometimes laid waste and overgrown with weeds.——

“ The

* *Hales’s* tract of schism, p. 7. 8.
 of the church of *England*.

† Defence of apology

“ The primitive church, which was under the apostles and
 “ martyrs, hath evermore been accounted the purest of all
 “ others ; and therefore the *antient fathers* often appeal to
 “ it——*Chrysostom* saith, *Then verily the church was a hea-*
 “ *ven*——but now we have scarcely the steps and tokens of
 “ these things. *Augustine* saith, *This kind of writings must*
 “ *be read, not with necessity to believe each thing, but with li-*
 “ *berty to judge each thing.* We may not consent unto the
 “ bishops, notwithstanding they be catholick, if they judge
 “ contrary to the canonical scriptures.——*For our judgments*
 “ *and expositions without those witnesses carry no credit.* *O-*
 “ *rigin.* *Ambrose.* *I would not you should believe us, but*
 “ *read the scriptures.*

“ You, Mr. *Harding*, have infused the apostles of
 “ Christ, not only with the substance of the things, which
 “ ye say, ye have received by tradition, but also with all
 “ your abuses, superstitions, corruptions, and idolatries, which
 “ ye have devised of yourselves. *Cyprian*, *If we return to the*
 “ *beginning of our Lord's tradition, all error of man must*
 “ *needs give place.*

“ This grieveth you, that we reform our churches now
 “ according to the pattern——of Christ and his apostles
 “ first institution. The true church is always known by
 “ the gospel, and no otherwise.” But Mr. *Harding* pleads,

“ Seeing Mr. *Jewel* can name no man, who began to
 “ say or allow *private mass*, and yet seeing it is said and
 “ allowed throughout *Christendom*, it is St. *Augustine's* rule,
 “ *It came from the apostles themselves.*” To which he an-
 “ swers, p. 131. 132. and says, “ If it be so, is your learning
 “ or your luck so ill, that for the space of so many hundred
 “ years out of the records of so many learned fathers, with
 “ such conference of study, such help of friends, such
 “ time and such leisure, ye are not able to shew us one good
 “ proof.

“ The antient learned fathers——were often forced to
 “ use the negative, and so to drive the hereticks, as we do
 “ you, to prove their affirmatives : which thing to do it
 “ was never possible. The antient father *Irenæus* thus stayed
 “ himself, as we do, by the negative : *this thing* neither did
 “ the prophets publish, nor our Lord teach, nor the apo-
 “ stles deliver. And *Tertullian*, *The very doctrine of here-*
 “ *ticks* compared together with the apostles doctrine, even
 “ by the diversity and contrariety that is in it, *beareth wit-*
 “ *ness of itself*, that it never came, neither from any apostle
 “ of Christ, nor from any apostolick man.

“ Christ

“ Christ *was* called a heretick by certain of *your* antient fathers. And if it may please you *soberly* to consider—
 “ ye shall find, throughout the whole body of the scriptures, that no people make ever so great crakes of the church, as they that were the *deadly enemies* of the church:
 “ nor none were so ready to condemn others of heresie, as they that *indeed* were themselves the greatest hereticks.

“ In plain speech, it is not the receiving the sacrament that worketh our joining with God. For whosoever is not joined to God before he receive the sacraments, he eateth and drinketh his own judgment. The sacraments be seals and witnesses, and not properly the causes of this conjunction. Otherwise our children that depart this life before they receive the communion, and all the godly fathers of the Old Testament, should have no conjunction with God.

“ And why is this provision thought so necessary? ”
 (and the same we might require as to baptism) “ And why is it counted so *cruel an injury*, if the sick man pass without it? Shall no man” (and shall no infant) “ be saved that *so* departeth? Indeed that were a *cruel injury* *.
 “ Infinite numbers of *children* and *others*, depart this life in God’s mercy, without that victual.” And I add, without baptism too, or else wo be to those children who die without it, through their parents neglect or mistake; and also to those who miss it through the error of their teachers, by whom they are persuaded they had baptism in their infancy, when they had it not. But

“ By our *faith* we are incorporate or made one body with Jesus Christ our Lord. *Afterward* the same incorporation is *assured* unto us, and *increased* in our baptism. So saith St. *Augustine*: *To this availeth baptism, that men being baptized, may be incorporated into Christ, and made his members.*

“ God’s name be blessed, (saith the good bishop) that is thus able to force out his truth, even by the mouths of them that openly withstood his truth.”

I may be perhaps now accuse’d, not only with prolixity, but with pretending a short answer to this little book, when I give you a long and tedious one; to which I reply, I do not give you these citations from Bp. *Feivel*, as needful in answer to this pamphlet, but as a proper application to the whole work; and my intention all along has been, not

M

simply

* Here take notice of our author’s *shocking consequences* at his conclusion.

simply to answer this or that man's work, but to leave something behind me when I leave the world, that may be useful and serviceable to the truth, when I can no other-wise speak to men.

I had made a much larger collection from the said bishop's apology, (but I'll shorten it.) He shows, that the liberty which the *church* claims, its charter perhaps will not be found; for, says he, "If neither the words, nor example, nor commandment of Christ, nor the understanding and practice of the apostles, can warrant us Christ's institution, alas! what warrant then have they that being utterly void of all these things, &c." p. 77.

This is directly what we say, We have all these things for believers baptism, but not the least footsteps of any of them appears in behalf of infant-sprinkling.

And Mr. *Harding* also has fully allowed, that the practice is not to be prov'd by scripture, but by tradition only, or to that effect. And the bishop himself says, "To baptize in the name of Christ, is to baptize according to the order, institution, and commandment of Christ—If they be so precise, and so earnest in ceremonies and devices of their own, how much more ought we to be earnest in matters touching the essential form of the institution of Christ.

"The objection that is made of keeping children from the communion is but childish, and nothing to the matter. For in so doing we divide not the mysteries, nor break any part of Christ's institution: — for notwithstanding it appears by St. *Augustine*, St. *Cyprian*, and others, that infants in the primitive church—were admitted to the holy communion, yet afterward upon good advice they were justly removed from it; because that being in that age, they were not *thought able* to examine and prove themselves according to the doctrine of St. *Paul*." p. 90.

Well, and are they more capable of repentance and faith, the qualifications required for baptism, according to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and of the *church of England* too? If not, why may not their baptism, by as good advice, be laid aside, and they justly removed from it?

"There have been many great *abuses* about the holy mysteries, not only of late years in the church of *Rome*, whereof we justly complain: but also in the primitive church, even from the apostles time. —

"I say not Mr. *Harding* is so wickedly-minded as *Valentinus* and *Marcion* was: but thus I say, He utterly refuseth

“ refuseth to stand to the apostles orders, and followeth
“ other late devised fancies——p. 152.

“ God is not partial, neither hideth his truth from the
“ simple, because he is simple : but from the proud and re-
“ probate, because he is wilful : and specially chuseth the
“ simple, of the world to confound the wise. The simplest
“ and grossest of them all——is able to hear the voice of
“ the shepherd, and to follow him. p. 160.

“ *Irenæus* calleth forth these hereticks, as we do now our
“ adversaries, to be tried by the *doctrine* and *churches* of the
“ apostles. For the apostles doctrine is the trial and rule
“ of faith.

“ I trust the indifferent reader seeth the scriptures are
“ plain enough of our side, and need no wresting. p. 195.

“ There have been sundry *great errors* raised and main-
“ tained in the church of old time, and that not only by
“ hereticks, but also by *holy learned* fathers. p. 259.

“ Christ is our only master, we appeal to him. p. 363.

“ We appeal from the church to Christ. p. 364.

“ Even in *St. Paul's* time there were certain that of like
“ superstition began to baptize the dead : which thing also
“ continued a long while after, as may appear by the coun-
“ cil of *Carthage*. They thought the very outward work
“ of baptism itself, only because it was done without any
“ *further motion* of the *mind*, was sufficient to remit their
“ sins.” And do not our opposers think the same with
“ respect to infants? But further, “ This old error our ad-
“ versaries have taken up.” p. 438. “ Verily to ascribe
“ felicity or remission of sin, which is the inward work
“ of the Holy Ghost, unto any manner of *outward action*
“ whatsoever, it is a superstitious, a gross, and a *Jewish*
“ error. p. 442.

“ In the sacrament of baptism the outward washing of
“ the body, is a *resemblance* * of the inward spiritual wash-
“ ing of the soul. p. 446.

“ If we seek to know the sacraments of the church,
“ what they are : if we would be instructed in the sacra-
“ ment of baptism——if we would know which is the
“ true church of God, it is very needful that we hear the
“ word of God. There is no other word that teacheth us
“ unto salvation.

M 2

“ *Chry-*

* The beauty of this figure is quite lost when 'tis apply'd to infants, and when 'tis perform'd by only sprinkling, or pouring water on the face, or other part of the body.

“ *Chrysostom* saith, All things are clear and plain in the
 “ holy scriptures: whatsoever things are necessary for us
 “ are also manifest.”

“ He (*Christ*) vouchsafed the poor and simple the know-
 “ ledge of his truth—the first that met him with triumph
 “ at *Jerusalem*, and sang Hosanna, were not bishops and
 “ priests, but babes and infants.

“ Some of late have beaten into your heads that *these* and
 “ many other like things came from the apostles by succes-
 “ sion——They are base born, yet because they have
 “ stollen into the church, and have been had in honour,
 “ some men have taught you, they have come even from
 “ heaven, and therefore they have fathered them upon
 “ Christ and his apostles.

“ When *Constantinus* the emperor endowed the church
 “ with lands and possessions, they say there was a voice of
 “ angels heard in the air, saying, This day is poison poured
 “ into the church——I doubt there was never treacle
 “ poured into it since.” And adds,

“ We see with our eyes how far we are strayed from
 “ the original——The sacraments that Christ left us for
 “ our most comfort, have been miserably mangled and
 “ defaced,——Some say the church cannot be forsaken
 “ ——not every particular church shall be established.

“ True baptism standeth not so much in washing of the
 “ body, as in the faith of the heart——The water itself is
 “ nothing, but by the working of God’s spirit, the death
 “ and merits of our Lord are assured to us.——* The sa-
 “ crament maketh not a Christian.

“ I seek not to astonish you by bringing in such a heap of
 “ authors: nor yet to seek mine own glory thereby; God
 “ is my witness, and his Christ. If I would seek mine own
 “ commodity, I should hold my peace, and not unfold
 “ these errors——Our glory is, to discharge our con-
 “ science.”

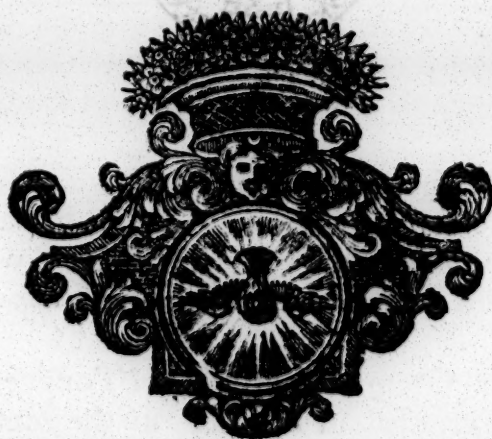
A few pages further he says, “ Baptism is the *sacrament*
 “ of our regeneration. When I say a sacrament, I mean a
 “ ceremony commanded by God in exprefs words: for
 “ God only hath the authority to institute a sacrament.
 “ ——*Chrysostom* saith, *The mystery were not of God, nor*
 “ *perfect, if thou shouldest put any thing to it.*——*Augas-*
 “ *tine* saith, *Join the word to the creature, and it is made a*
 “ *sacrament.* This creature or element is visible, as are
 “ water,

* Why then is it apply’d to infants, seeing they can’t be made
 Christians by it?

“ water, bread, and wine. The word which must be joined
 “ ed is the commandment and institution of Christ.
 “ Without the word and the commandment and institution,
 “ it is no sacrament. ——— ”

Thus, with no small labour, I have at last finish'd the task that was laid upon me-----with imperfection enough, I confess ; but my conscience is clear enough in this, that I have made no willful mistakes, and my weakness, I hope, God and the candid reader will pardon : and I bless God who has enabled me to collect, apply, and leave so much sound Protestant doctrine amongst you, by which truth is distinguished from error, the purity of the Christian doctrine and the ordinances of Christ are owned, and men's inventions are discovered and reprov'd ; and if you keep close to these rules, and pray to God for his directions, *you shall then know the truth ; and the truth shall make you free.* You will then see that *Protestant Dissenters* in general are not to be *guided* so as to return to the *church of England*, till they reform the abuses they are guilty of ; but to reform their own churches as much as possible, till they arrive at the perfect gospel pattern ; and finally, till every true Christian comes in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

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A P P E N D I X

T H E S E C O N D.

IF it should be objected against this performance; that though in the first part I pretend to justify the Dissenters in general, and clear 'em from the charge of schism, and yet in the second part, I retort some of the Dissenters own arguments upon themselves; my reply is, how could I help this? could any one think I would not plead the cause which I believed to be the real truth; or that I would sooth or flatter any in their errors? I was glad to keep company with every denomination of Protestant Dissenters, and other Christians, as long as I found them followers of Christ, his apostles, and the primitive Christians; but whenever they left that path, I did not think I *should* follow them any further; yet still retain an universal charity, and hope I ever shall: Nor should I dislike any man for pleading his own cause, so that it be done with moderation and tenderness to others who may differ from him. And I think if I had timely known that the dissenting gentleman (of whose letters I have made use in my first part) had been the author of *the baptism of infants, a reasonable service, &c.* I should hardly have forborn shewing how inconsistent many of his arguments are, in his letters to Mr. *White*, with that practice: But I am glad to find, that this piece is sufficiently and fully (tho' briefly) answered by Mr. *Killingworth* in the appendix to his examination of the Rev. Dr. *James Foster's* sermon on catholic communion.

There is one thing more of which I would advertise the reader; and that is, Mr. *White* reflects on the Dissenters, because they seem chearfully to go through the ceremonies of marriage (as is the usage of the C. of E.) though they will not comply with the rest of their ceremonies. This he thinks an inconsistency with their own principles and practice,

tice, as the case stands at present with the Dissenters; and I have allowed p. 41, &c. that in this, I think, he has some advantage of us, and have confessed it seems strange that the Dissenters who are reformed as to other (originally popish, jewish, or heathenish) ceremonies, should so readily conform to these. And I have recommended the practice of the people called Quakers in this case, as acting with the greatest simplicity and purity. But I have since seen an old piece wrote by Mr. *Thomas Grantham* an eminent Baptist, who in a postscript to his *last and most friendly debate about infant baptism*, treats, Section 1. “*of the manner of marriages among the baptized believers.*” Hence by the way it appears, that about three-score years ago, however that practice may have been since omitted, the Baptists then married among themselves. In the same section, p. 77, 78. he says, “It is to be considered, that as in other ordinances of God, so also in this, men, yea authorities in most nations of the world, have grossly abused this liberty (viz. of some decent usages or ceremonies in marriage) by ordaining things ridiculous and sinful in the solemnizing of their nuptial contracts, as shall be shewed. And therefore when and where such prophanations are found, it is commendable always, and sometimes necessary, for such as God has enlightened to such corruptions, to endeavour after a modest and prudent manner, to have all the ways of God, and particularly this of marriage; to have them, I say, restored to their purity, by being purged from such things as tend to the profanation of them.

“And herein the learned of the church of *England* are our precedents: for when they came to consider the popish ceremonies used in their marriages, they were so far from conforming to them, or judging those marriages to be null which were made without them, that they boldly testify against them, and some laid down their lives among the martyrs in opposition to the Papists opinion and practice in the case of marriages, as *Woodman* and *Benbridge*. This is testified by Dr. *Willit*, synopf. p. 679. And where also he labours much, to shew the errors of the Papists, both in their doctrine and practice concerning marriage, and their ceremonies used therein, and particularly upon this ground, because they made the celebration of marriage a sacramental, or religious, act, and had no words of institution in the scriptures for so doing.

“ This

“ This therefore which has been said concerning the essentials of marriage, will (as we conceive) warrant our marriage-covenants and contracts, to be according to God’s law; and though we desire and endeavour to come as near as *we can* to the custom of our nation in the celebration of marriage, which we confess to be of the nature of moral and civil contracts of the highest degree, and therefore under the cognizance of the power magistratical; yet when the church of *England* interposes with her power ecclesiastical, to oblige us to the observance of her ceremonies, which are not of the essence of marriage; nor, so far as we can judge, such as we can answer to God, nor act in, with the peace of our own souls, we are then *constrained*, as in other cases, so in this, to satisfy ourselves in a diligent observance of the rules of God’s law, both for the substance and celebration of our nuptial contracts; and in so doing, we suppose both the statute and civil law, as well as the law of reason, will at least so far favour us, as to vindicate us therein to have all things necessary and essential to the solemn ordinance of marriage. —

The Contents of his second Section stand thus :

SECT. II.

“ **T**HE law of the land does not null or make void the marriages of the baptized believers, but does rather establish them.” Here he says,

“ That this also is no uncertain position, but a clear truth, will appear, if we consider; first, that the chief ground or prime foundation of the laws of *England* are clearly for us; for thus saith a learned lawyer,

“ *The first ground of the law of England is the law of reason, which is to be kept—and of necessity it must be; and because it is written in the heart, therefore it may not be put away nor changed; — against this law, prescription, statute nor custom, may not prevail: and if any be brought against it, they be not prescriptions, statutes, nor customs, but things void and against justice.* Doct. & Stud. l. i. c. 5. & c. 2.

“ *The second ground of the law of England is the law of God.* And upon these grounds (I suppose) was that excellent statute made in the case of marriage, wherein we have these words—*That no reservation or prohibition*

“ (God’s law except) shall trouble or impeach any marriage,
 “ 22 Hen. 8. c. 38. *Will. synop. p. 711.* of which statute
 “ bishop Hall gives this account, *i. e. The statute of 32*
 “ *Hen. 8. c. 38. intending to marr the romish market of gain-*
 “ *ful and injurious dispensations, professeth to allow all mar-*
 “ *riages that are not prohibited by God’s law :* And this law
 “ is not yet repealed. And therefore it hence appears that
 “ no law was then thought necessary to the essence of mar-
 “ riage, but the law of God.—Mr. Swingburn, batche-
 “ lor of the civil law, tells us, *That an unsolemn marriage, is*
 “ *not therefore no marriage, because it is unsolemn, the banns*
 “ *perhaps not being published, or the marriage being not cele-*
 “ *brated in the face of the church, but privately in a cham-*
 “ *ber, or some other rite or ceremony being omitted ; but it is*
 “ *nevertheless reputed for true marriage, both in the ecclesiasti-*
 “ *cal courts in respect of the essence or knot of matrimony,*
 “ *and in temporal courts in respect of the wives dowry, and*
 “ *other legal effects.* *Treat. of last Wills, p. 20, 21.*

“ And to the same effect speaketh *Espenc. c. 11. clandest.*
 “ *matrimo. Consensus facit nuptias, sed eorum qui sui jure*
 “ *sunt ; It is the consent of the parties which makes the mar-*
 “ *riage, they being such as are at their own dispose.* And
 “ again,

“ *Si pompa aliaq; nuptiarum celebritas omittatur, &c.* If
 “ the pomps and celebrity of marriage be omitted, nothing
 “ is wanting to the firmness and sureness of marriage. *Cod.*
 “ *l. 5. tit. 5. tit. 2.*

“ And the canon law tells us ; *nuptiarum copula Dei*
 “ *mandato perficitur ; The marriage-bond is perfected by the*
 “ *commandment of God.*—And so rational and necessary it is,
 “ that the ceremonies appointed by the Papists or others,
 “ should not be esteemed to belong at all to the essence of
 “ marriage, that *Durandus*, an eminent Papist, tells us,
 “ —*That there is neither any outward holy sign, nor [no mi-*
 “ *nister] necessary in matrimony besides the parties ; for,*
 “ *saith he, matrimony may be solemnized by a proctor between*
 “ *parties that are absent.* So then the presence of a priest
 “ is not of the essence of marriage, seeing it may be cele-
 “ brated without them.

“ And which is yet more ; *Bellarmino*, that so much re-
 “ nowned cardinal, is alledged by the said Dr. *Willit*, say-
 “ ing, *That marriage being of the nature of contracts, the*
 “ *parties themselves suffice, and that it may be done in their*
 “ *absence.* [Meaning still, that all contracts be witnessed.]

“ And

“ And here the words of Mr. *Diodate* are worthy of remembrance upon *Mal. 2. 15.* *did not God in the beginning create Adam alone, out of whom he framed Eve to be his wife, without creating any more women for one man, or more men for one woman? shewing thereby, that as he appointed matrimony by one only law [in which to be sure there was no ceremonies] of lawful conjunction, it likewise ought to be one with one, and two in the same flesh.*

“ From all which it is apparent that there may be lawful marriage where there is no ceremonies, much more without the ceremonies of the ring, and bowing at the altar, and the ceremonies are not therefore in any-wise to be made essential to marriage, and that the contract between two persons lawfully qualified for the state of marriage, and their actual taking each other into the relation and covenant of husband and wife, before sufficient witnesses, is essential, firm, and lawful marriage, and consequently that the marriages made amongst the baptized believers are true marriages in the eye of the law of this land.”

He concludes this section with the united authority of the late lord chief justice *Hales*, and Dr. *Burnet*, who (he says) *fully express themselves for the sufficiency of marriages as made by the present Dissenters.* But for brevity I must omit his citations.

N. B. I have also omitted in Sect. 1. the form of a certificate to be signed and witnessed, and manner of the performance of marriage among the Baptists, or other Dissenters, and also Mr. *Grantham's* scripture account of the marriages of the Patriarchs, &c.

“ Sect. III. Of the most important question touching the case depending, viz. *Whether it be necessary that marriages should be celebrated by a minister? and whether they may be valid and lawful without them?*

“ THIS is the question propounded by the learned and worthy bishop *Hall*, in his book of *resolut.* p. 361. c. 8. whose answer will greatly strengthen that which we have said, respecting the law of God, for thus he speaks:

“ *It is no marvel if the church of Rome (which hold matrimony a sacrament, conferring grace by the very work wrought)*

wrought) require an absolute necessity of the Priest's hand in
 so holy an act : but for us who (though reverently esteem-
 ing that sacred institution, yet) set it a key lower, it ad-
 mits of too much question, whether we need to stand upon
 the terms of a minister's agency in the performance of that
 solemn action ?

So then it is a clear case, it seems, unless we fall back
 to the Papists to make marriage a sacrament, there is no
 absolute necessity to have a priest to celebrate marriage,
 and consequently it may be done lawfully (by God's law
 at least) without them. And assuredly that doctrine which
 makes a minister of God absolutely necessary to the ce-
 lebration of marriages, can in no wise be true, because
 it is most unreasonable to impeach all those marriages,
 which all the world over, from the beginning to this day,
 have been celebrated without them : if then all nations
 have all things that are essential to marriage, and yet
 few nations have had God's faithful ministers to cele-
 brate it, it is manifest, there may be lawful marriages
 without a minister in all nations, seeing the essentials of
 marriages are the same in all nations.

And though we yield willingly that a man of God is a
 fit person to declare God's will and authority in the rati-
 fication of our marriages, yet it follows not at all, that
 none but a man of God may be fit to do this, or that
 none may lawfully do it but a herald of the Almighty.
 But what need is there of many words ? the bishop an-
 swers the question, where he tells us, that though the
 Papists make it absolutely necessary to have a minister's
 hand in the act of marriage, yet the Protestants set it a
 key lower, &c.

Those that called themselves Catholics in *Augustine's*
 time, did allow the baptism and other sacred acts of the
Donatists, &c. to be valid. It is strange then, that the
 marriages of the present Dissenters should be made nul-
 lities by the common Protestants, who themselves are
 esteemed but Dissenters in a neighbour nation, and there-
 fore their marriages are as liable to censure there as ours
 are here ; but these are hardships and cruelties in the opi-
 nion of that learned lawyer, the late lord chief justice
 H A E.

“ Sect. IV. *Treats of the Rituals of the church of England*
 “ *concerning marriage, and the reasons why the baptized*
 “ *believers comply not with them.*

“ **H**OW glad we should be to see an end of all con-
 “ tention amongst Christians about unnecessary ce-
 “ remonies, we have shewed in our *friendly epistle*, and our
 “ late *apology*; wherein also we have professed our earnest
 “ desire for concord with all that love the Lord *Jesus*, and
 “ more particularly with the church of *England*. But
 “ it seems all that we can offer below a full compliance even
 “ with the most useless ceremonies, is not thought worth
 “ the notice of the present clergy, who now do many of
 “ them wonderfully exalt themselves, despising such as
 “ dissent from them, and that so much the more as by
 “ how much we seek to them for peace.

“ Marriage-covenants, we confess, are things of that na-
 “ ture and importance that they are worthy the care of the
 “ laws of all nations. But such has been the unhappiness
 “ of the churches which are national, as to ordain such
 “ things in order to the celebration of marriage, which be-
 “ comes a spare to many; this the Protestants found true
 “ by experience, when under the papal yoke, and there-
 “ fore have exploded part of their ritual, whereof we have
 “ an account from Dr. *Willit*, and the manner thus.

“ 1. *They that are to be joined in matrimony, must be*
 “ *blessed by the priest.*

“ 2. *Oblation must be made for them in the sacrifice of the*
 “ *mass.*

“ 3. *They are covered with a veil.*

“ 4. *They are coupled together with a ribbon, partly white*
 “ *and partly blue.*

“ 5. *The bridegroom giveth to the bride a ring, hallowed*
 “ *first, and blessed by the priest.*

“ 6. *The priest commendeth them to God in prayer.*

“ 7. *He admonisheth them to their mutual duties.* Dr.
 “ *Willit* synopf. p. 713.

“ Now this use of the ring amongst the papists is con-
 “ demned by this learned doctor of the church of *England*
 “ for a *superstitious toy*, partly for that it must be *hallowed*
 “ *by the priest*; and partly for that the man holding the wo-
 “ *man by the ring, their fingers across, some inchanting words,*
 “ *says he, are then muttered*; but the words he sets not
 “ down.

“ And

“ And now because the use of the *ring* in the church of
 “ *England*, and the kneeling at the altar, and to the priest
 “ for his blessing, are very doubtful to us, we shall here take
 “ a view of the matter. And,

“ 1. The ring must be laid upon the service book.

“ 2. The priest must then give the ring to the bride-
 “ groom.

“ 3. The bridegroom must put the ring upon the fourth
 “ finger of the woman's left hand.

“ 4. And holding the woman by that finger, must say
 “ these strange words, *With this ring I thee wedd : with my*
 “ *body I thee worship : with all my worldly goods I thee endow :*
 “ *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy*
 “ *Ghost. Amen.*

“ Now these things, so far as we are able to understand,
 “ do look as much like superstition, as any thing the Pro-
 “ testant doctor has to object against the popish use of the
 “ ring : For why must the ring be laid upon the service-
 “ book, and so pass through the priest's hand, before it be
 “ fit for the use it is to be made of ? Certainly the ring is
 “ hereby supposed to be made more fit to wed the woman ;
 “ and this it cannot be, unless it be supposed to be sancti-
 “ fied, or if there be nothing of all this, it seems to be
 “ wholly superfluous.

“ And for the man to say he weds her (whom he had
 “ married sufficiently before) with that ring, in the *name*
 “ *of the Father, &c.* is so like a sacramental form of words,
 “ as that we are sure none more solemn are appointed to be
 “ used in holy baptism : nor can any higher form of words
 “ be devised. Had almighty God appointed this form of
 “ words to be annexed to the use of a *ring*, all men would,
 “ and surely might, have concluded marriage among
 “ Christians to be a sacrament as well as baptism : but see-
 “ ing he hath not donè it, it seems to us too bold an at-
 “ tempt for any church to impose such a rite or ceremony
 “ in so great a name, and therefore *in conscience we dare*
 “ *not conform to the church of England in this thing ;* for it is
 “ dangerous to *speake a word*, much more to make an insti-
 “ tute, *in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost,*
 “ *which he hath not commanded.*”

Next the author considers *whence the ring in marriage was*
derived; and say, “ It is reckoned among the heathen *Roman*
 “ rites in their marriages—and that this seems to be the
 “ radix or spring of the ring in marriage, unless perhaps
 “ it might be, before this, among the superstitious *Jews*;

“ —But which of these soever was the spring-head, though
 “ there seems to be something of superstition or folly in
 “ the business, yet I think an impartial man must needs
 “ say, the ring has attracted more of that kind among the
 “ Christian nations, than it had among the Jews or Hea-
 “ thens. The short is, were the ring used only as a civil
 “ ceremony, without this seemingly sacred solemnity, we
 “ should say nothing. But for Christians to adopt either
 “ the Heathen, or Jewish superstitious rites into the ser-
 “ vice of the church, and to make the celebration of them
 “ ministerial acts, is a business for the serious and thinking
 “ Christian to consider.

“ And assuredly till the Lord——encline the hearts
 “ of his people with one accord to restore his holy ordi-
 “ nances (and amongst the rest this of marriage) to their
 “ native purity and simplicity, there will be continual cause
 “ of sorrow, discontents and animosities amongst Chri-
 “ stians.” He says more in this last section; but I think
 this is so full that nothing more needs to be added upon this
 head.

For my own part, I was convinc'd that we could not
 conscionably comply with these ceremonies of marriage
 which the Church of *England* compel us to (if we go to
 them) before I read this postscript of Mr. *Grantham's*, or
 Mr. *White's* reflections upon the Dissenters, for our com-
 plying with them and not with the rest of their ceremo-
 nies in worship; and I now confess, I am of his mind
 that 'tis an inconsistency in the Dissenters to comply with
 these so doubtful ceremonies in our marriages, and not in
 other cases; and that they who looked rightly into that
 matter could not with a good conscience comply with them.
 And you see now by what I have so largely cited out of
 Mr. *Grantham's* postscript to his friendly debate, &c. that
 about sixty years ago it was the practice of the Baptists to
 marry amongst themselves: you'll ask me then, perhaps,
 how they came to let it drop in so general a manner, as
 'tis at this day; so that most now go to the established
 church to be married (I will not say all, for I suppose,
 there are some still in this nation to be excepted) and then
 they are forc'd to comply with all those superstitious cere-
 monies which the priest they go to will impose upon them.
 And whereas some say they can go to one that will use but
 few ceremonies: that, to me, is but a blind put upon them-
 selves; for do they not use that which the order for *marriage*
 has made the essential part of it, as *kneeling before the altar*,
 C being

being *wedded* with the ring when the same is hallowed by the priest upon the book, &c. and all in the name of the Father, &c. Why, some will say, it ought to be done in a solemn manner; that's readily allow'd; but will any say that the marriages of the patriarchs, tho' plain and simple, were not solemn, or that the Quakers now, or the method and manner which Mr. Grantham has described as used among the Baptists was not solemn, which was, that a writing is signed by the parties married (and note no minister marries them, but they marry themselves) to keep in memory the contract and covenant of their marriage, to this effect.

These are to testify to all men, that we A. B. of, &c. And C. D. of &c. have, the day of the date hereof, entered into the covenant and state of marriage according to a solemn contract heretofore made between our selves, and with the consent of such as are concerned in order thereunto: and we do now in the presence of Almighty God, and the witnesses hereafter named, ratify the said contract and covenant-act of marriage this day verbally made; in both which we do, in the fear of God mutually and solemnly, and for our parts respectively promise, in the strength of God, to live together in the state of marriage, according to God's ordinance, from this day forward, to love each other as husband and wife, and faithfully to perform all the duties to which we are bound by God's law, and the good laws of the land, in that case provided, till the Lord by death shall separate us. In Testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hands, the Day of, &c.

Then is annexed a certificate of the witnesses, thus:

We whose names are subscribed, do testify, that the above A. B. and C. D. the day and year abovesaid, did mutually take each other into the state of marriage, acknowledging the contract and covenant, and ratifying the same by word, and by the subscription thereof as abovesaid. In witness whereof, we do hereunto set our hands the day and year abovesaid.

“ After these things, some suitable counsel or instruction
“ is given to the parties (but no man takes upon himself
“ the office to marry any, that being the proper act of the
“ parties themselves) and then prayer is made to God for
“ his blessing upon the parties married, &c.”

And will any say this is not solemn, or not most agreeable to the law of God concerning marriage? and should we not dread the affixing of the most awful name of God, of
Father,

Father, Son and Holy Ghost (which is appointed to be used in Baptism when that ordinance is duly perform'd, and not otherwise) to men's inventions and superstitious ceremonies, whereby they seem to make marriage a *Sacrament*, for which there is no foundation in all the N. T. And this which the C. of E. uses as the very essence of their marriages, is the very thing which the Baptists formerly (and now also when they are enlightned into it) scrupled, and now scruple. For as to their other services, as counsel and advice from the scriptures, agreeable prayers for the parties, &c. I don't know there is any ground at all to scruple these, but rather think there should and would be a ready compliance if they would abate the other. For the author above cited says, that the parties to be married, *taking each other by the hand, do declare, that they from that day forward, during their natural lives together, do enter into the state of marriage, using the words, or the substance of them, which are appointed for the words of marriage in the service-book (as acknowledging such words to be very fit for that purpose) &c.*

Now these things thus performed in the face of a publick congregation when they are assembled together for the worship of God (which in my opinion is a proper time for the solemnization of marriage) surely must be allow'd to be a very solemn action, and as far as the scripture gives us any account in that case, is fully agreeable to the mind and will of God; and what then can any one object against it? the clergy of the Church of *England* ought not to object against the Dissenters marrying among themselves, or to complain, tho' this, in a manner, lost practice, should be reviv'd amongst us, since we are now stirred up by one of their own order, a *Reverend B. D.* to take that matter into a more serious consideration, so as either, not to comply with them in the ceremonies of marriage, or else to leave our own congregations, go to church, and comply with their other ceremonies as well as with this, which he zealously argues we are under *indispensable obligations to embrace*. I know very well that our friends think otherwise, and that they can't in conscience comply with their ceremonies in general; and why then should we not endeavour to take off this occasion of reproach from ourselves, and from the noble cause we profess, *viz.* to bear a testimony for Christ in the world?

I apprehend there may be two reasons why some will be backward in yielding to this proposal (which you ought not

to think is mine, and therefore to be the backwarder; since I produce so good company and reasons for what I say) viz. 1. For *fear* they may meet with some prosecutions for it. And 2. Because they may be unwilling to be reproach'd with being under a *mistake*, or living in some error for so many years, when they verily thought they were in the whole truth, and therefore they would be constant in it.

1. To the first our author above shews this was indeed the reason of his writing *concerning the manner of marriages, &c.* "Because some of the baptized believers had been prosecuted as offenders, for not conforming to the ceremonies of the king, and kneeling to the altar in the celebration of marriage." But that I think must be supposed to have been before the time of the revolution, when there were prosecutions (and severe persecutions against the Dissenters) on other accounts, as well as for their not complying with these ceremonies of marriage, for 'tis in fact plain, that tho' the people called Quakers have been also prosecuted in the courts for their way of marriage among themselves, yet nothing could be made of these prosecutions, the judge still giving the cause in their favour; and 'tis well known *that* people are constant to their principle in that case, and now for a long time have met with no interruption; and yet they have no special privilege granted 'em, but what the other Dissenters may have, as well as they: *i. e.* They choose to shew their loyalty to the government (and I question not but the Baptists are as forward in that as any people) and so they procure a slip of parchment (large enough for their purpose) on which is the king's five shilling stamp, on which they write their marriage contracts at their pleasure. And this (I am told) is a thing commonly done by others as well as them, and that this is as good in law, as a certificate out of the Commons. Now then what have we to fear in this matter? Is not this time of liberty a fit time for us to renew that courage which was in our ancestors, and revive the practice which they maintain'd even in times of persecution? But however, we should remember, that if we *suffer with Christ we shall also reign with him*; that under persecutions for Christ, and for his ways, we should rejoyce, because (1 Pet. iii. 14.) *if we suffer for righteousness sake we are happy.* But

2. It too plainly appears that men are very unwilling to own or acknowledge themselves to have been heretofore in a mistake;

a mistake; tho' instead of its being any reproach at all to do this, it is even an honour. I have met with a piece printed in 1718 that fully shews this. 'Tis intitled *a sure way to Orthodoxy in all sorts of controversies*; &c. Whether the author was a Churchman or a Dissenter I know not, and it is equal to me who or what he was, since he appears firm for the present establishment; and advises to all due obedience to governours, &c. But to the present case (as it may be agreeably apply'd) he says, "Whoever has the good sense of religion and share of humility, to acknowledge a mistake—will ever be respected as one who has the furniture of virtue, integrity, and true greatness of soul in him. Good and great people, have been guilty of inadvertency and mistake; but they are the best, the greatest, who *confess* the one, and *retract* the other, as soon as they perceive it: and who does not, can neither be good nor great. Tho' it is very illustrious and most excellent in itself, the noble precedent of St. Paul has render'd it the more abundant comely, *Act. xxiii. 5.*" And he seems to settle the sense of that passage to his purpose. And says further, p. 14, &c. "If St. Paul therefore acknowledg'd himself guilty of an inadvertence, and was not ashamed to retract and renounce it publickly (a whole assembly being witness) and immediately and willingly stands corrected by his implacable enemies too, as soon as ever they hinted his forgetting such a direction of scripture, no body, tho' never such a zealot in their way, ought to deem it any disparagement to recede from a mistake, when *friendly* put in mind of it. He was, at the same time, an instance of inadvertency, and of the highest honour and virtue: for he had no sooner an hint given him of the former, but he took it kindly, and corrected himself; his love to truth was immovable and impartial, for he fitly respected it, and paid his ready submission to it;—he forgot himself for a moment, to shew that no man is totally exempted from that frailty——But then he *publickly* retracted his mistake; this signifying, that it was beneath no man living so to do, in a matter of such consequence, as entire submission in word, as well as deed, to the civil powers set over us. He no sooner recollected himself by what the standers-by said, but he saved them the trouble of quoting the scripture against his own practice, *for it is written*, says he of his own accord, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of the people.*

" He

“ He knew full well that the *scripture* was the sacred and
 “ impartial rule ordained to guide and govern us all,
 “ whatever differences there might be amongst us ; he
 “ desired no fairer play, for the Evangelical Truths he
 “ was contending for, than to have all the differences and
 “ variance between them, submitted to the plain decisions
 “ of it.” And then says,

“ *St. Austin* got as much, if not more reputation, by his
 “ *retractions*, than all his other works: In his preface to
 “ them he very finely and ingenuously declares, *that what*
 “ *he was about to do was not to be deferred ; that none but*
 “ *your imprudent simple people would find fault with him for*
 “ *finding fault with himself, and some of his own writings*
 “ *and positions ; but whoever says I ought not to have said those*
 “ *things, which I am now censuring and retracting, says*
 “ *the truth, and closes with me.*

“ Several of the finest reasoning and deepest learning in
 “ our nation, have thought it an encomium upon their
 “ judgment to retract an error.”

And here he names Mr. *Lock*, Mr. *Norris*, Dr. *Whitby*,
 and Bishop *Stillingfleet*, as so doing. And says he, “ *Si non*
 “ *errasset fecerit ille minus.*

“ If we know any modern strayers from the truth, and
 “ well inclin’d to return to it, let us give them the same
 “ complement. Whatsoever errors, mistakes, or inad-
 “ vertencies, any of us may be guilty of, behold how they
 “ may become an occasion of glory ! If we have no other
 “ way of greatning our characters, and arriving at lauda-
 “ ble fame ; this of *retracting* is ready, this of recanting
 “ is open to us. ’Tis certainly a virtuous and glorious am-
 “ bition ; it is an honour in the highest veneration, with
 “ the greatest and wisest : and are they not the best
 “ judges ? It sensibly betokens a largeness of soul, upright-
 “ ness of heart, a free generous mind, and a *conscience*
 “ *under the direction of God and religion*, and not the se-
 “ ducement and corruptions of men and party.”

Then he shews how pleasing ’tis to almighty God. “ But
 “ (says he) if they will still fortify themselves in error,
 “ against light and inward conviction, or the obvious means
 “ of better information ; all the bad effects of obstinacy,
 “ will be the issue of it. It becomes their pertinacy, not
 “ their perseverance ; for this is only in a good thing, the
 “ other in that which is evil and pernicious. It argues an
 “ immoderate partiality, culpable bigotry, and a morose
 “ state of mind and judgment, in hostility against the light
 “ of

“ of our duty. It declares a temper which would rather be
 “ pleased and humoured, and still deceived, than admit un-
 “ acceptable truth, effective of the *change* they have no heart
 “ to; though never so necessary and saving; so clearly,
 “ nor often propounded by God, if it grates upon the favo-
 “ rite error, it has cold entertainment.” That part of this
 work, from p. 29. is “ *The true reputation of Constancy and*
 “ *Steadiness stated, and all other Excuses considered.*” And
 here he says,

“ CONSTANCY is deservedly held in high reputation in
 “ the world; the stamp of value current on it, is no more
 “ than its due. And I would by no means offer to impair
 “ it, when once it will submit to be measured by the *ho-*
 “ *nour that comes from God.* Joh. v. 44. — (and here) 1.
 “ That the honour *which comes from God* is the only true
 “ standard of honour and reputation. — 2. That they only
 “ do consist in being constant to important truth, and the
 “ plain will of God, and steadfast to clear reason and duty.
 “ — We are all of us under that superior and indispen-
 “ sible concern, of submitting to greater evidence of reason and
 “ duty; and where that clearer and plainer manifestation
 “ offers itself, the man is so far from being obliged in any
 “ degree of honour, or constancy, still to judge a thing so,
 “ because he heretofore judg’d it; still to say, and main-
 “ tain, by virtue of his having heretofore said, and main-
 “ tain’d it; that on the contrary, he is obliged in the func-
 “ tion of a man and christian, by all the ties of honour,
 “ and of reverence to truth, to desist, and change his
 “ mind. —

“ To change for reasons of truth, duty, and conscience,
 “ is to be constant to *truth, duty, and conscience*; ’tis for
 “ certain the honour that comes from God, our praise, sin-
 “ cerity, our virtue. But to change for sinister ends, and
 “ unworthy motives, is the *true*, scandalous, dishonourable
 “ inconstancy, no better than hypocrisy and iniquity.”

I could hardly help running large here, but must forbear,
 and shall cite a passage or two out of Dr. Gale, which I think
 pertinent to the present case. In vol. 1. serm. 6. he says,

“ If our prejudices have so great an influence upon us, to
 “ blind our own mind, and pervert every thing that’s of-
 “ fered for our information; in order to our reading the
 “ scriptures, and studying them as we ought, to gain any
 “ advantage and knowledge from them, we must of ne-
 “ cessity lay aside, and throw off these great hindrances of
 “ our

“ our improvement : — ’Tis not any opinions themselves
 “ we should get rid of, under the notion of prejudices, but
 “ only that fondness and love for them, which converts our
 “ notions into prejudices in the ill sense of the word : for in
 “ this consists the formal nature of prejudice, and in a rash
 “ supposition of a certain and necessary connection between
 “ our opinions and truths ; this only renders them mischie-
 “ vous and hurtful, and gives them all that power and in-
 “ fluence we complain of. — We should keep the mind in
 “ a just balance, not in the least inclined either way, but
 “ always ready to yield to the appearance of truth ; and
 “ permit the greatest weight from time to time to prepon-
 “ derate, as any additions may be made on one side, or the
 “ other. This is being free and impartial to all sentiments
 “ or opinions, as we ought to be ; which we should not so
 “ much as permit ourselves to love and desire ; no, not even
 “ under the notion of being true, because this may betray us
 “ into a love of falsehood for truths ; but without loving the
 “ opinions themselves, we should fix in our minds only a
 “ general constant love and desire, that all our opinions
 “ should be true, without vainly imagining that all are so in
 “ fact : and this only can be properly called the love of
 “ truth, and this will always keep us teachable and open
 “ to information. In proportion as this temper of mind
 “ prevails, we shall be more or less willing and ready to hear
 “ and receive instruction from any quarter, to *examine, al-*
 “ *ter,* or lay aside our own opinions, and give due force and
 “ weight to every thing that is offered to us. And as this
 “ disposition of mind is necessary to our improvement in all
 “ other kinds of knowledge, so is it likewise to our reading
 “ and making a right use of the scripture.” And in the
 same sermon he says,

“ All christians should take care to entertain a due re-
 “ gard to their ministers, and the assistance to be had from
 “ them towards the understanding the scriptures.” And
 having mentioned how proud and ignorant ecclesiasticks go-
 verned and tyrannized over a stupid people, &c. he then says,
 “ But must all lawful, just esteem and influence of ministers
 “ therefore be set aside ? Because some ministers of the chri-
 “ stian church under several titles and denominations of au-
 “ thority and pride, have exercised a cruel and illegal usur-
 “ pation and dominion over the minds and consciences of
 “ men, must others therefore now be utterly divested of
 “ every degree of influence and regard ? Because some grew
 “ insolent

“ insolent and mischievous, must others now be judged useless ?

“ I beseech you, let things of this nature be considered with more seriousness, judge of the matter for yourselves by all means ; but pray, see that you judge impartially. I don’t require you to *believe me* ; but let me persuade you to *search the scriptures*. — 1 Tim. v. 17. there is a very express, full, and extensive canon laid down: *Let the elders, &c.* — Again, Heb. xiii. 17. *Obey them who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : For they watch for your souls, as they who must give account.* ’Tis reckon’d amongst the qualifications of a bishop, that he should be *apt to teach*, 1 Tim. iii. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 28. And Acts xx. 28. God has appointed *some teachers* in the church, who are directed to *take heed to themselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers ; to feed the church of God, which he has redeemed with his own blood.*

“ I have said nothing to explain and enforce these passages of scripture, because it seems altogether needless. Are the men of whom the scripture says these things, to be entirely neglected and disregarded ? Are all these expressions and ways of speaking used in the scripture, of no import ? Do they mean nothing at all ? Or don’t they rather most fully and plainly show that there is a reverence and regard due to them ? — So far as the ministers are teachers, the members of the church are learners, in the same degree and proportion ; and they must hear and attend, weigh and consider, and submit themselves to the instructions of these their teachers, with a willingness and desire to know and learn the doctrines and duties of christianity from their mouths. And the reason of all this regard and attention is very plain ; for they come to you in the name of CHRIST, and pretend only to deliver his commands to you ; and therefore should be received and hearkened to with proportionable attention and concern. For till we have *thus heard and examined* what they have to say, we can’t tell but it may be the doctrine of CHRIST ; and then, according to our Lord’s own rule, Luk. x. 16. *He that heareth them, heareth him ; &c.* —

“ In the last place, we should take care to fix in our minds a *strong and firm resolution* of *believing and acting* in all things agreeable to the scriptures, *without fear or bias* : We may otherwise be afraid or unwilling to dis-

“ cern the truth, when it may cross our intrest, or expose
 “ us to danger.” And then having taken notice of the dan-
 ger we were lately in, and deliver’d from, so that we now
 enjoy our liberties, he adds, “ But notwithstanding this,
 “ there is still great occasion for using our utmost endea-
 “ vours, to become superior to *all apprehensions* of any in-
 “ conveniencies, which may be brought on us by the pro-
 “ fession of the truth. We must *dare* to be *reproached* and
 “ *vilified*, and even to *starve* for conscience sake. — A man
 “ who sincerely studies the scripture, with a design to learn
 “ the truth, does not know how the evidence may arise,
 “ and appear to him on one side or the other; and fear of
 “ dangers will be apt to stifle his convictions, to blind his
 “ eyes, or shut them against *encreasing* light. Therefore
 “ to secure a perfect freedom and liberty, and make a right
 “ use and improvement of the reading and study of the
 “ scriptures, he must be able to look contempt, poverty,
 “ and persecutions of all kinds in the face, fearless, and un-
 “ daunted.”

I could have given you a great many more citations from
 the abovesaid authors, as well as from others, but I think I
 have said enough to show that we have *sufficient reasons* and
 authority, to revive the almost lost practice of marrying
 amongst ourselves, without going to any priest, or submit-
 ting to their ceremonies: And though I don’t find the en-
 couragement which I expected in the case, our friends not
 yielding to consider of it so much as I think they should;
 they are afraid, I find, they shall condemn their own former
 practice, which they think will reflect upon ’em, though
 the author of the *sure way to orthodoxy* (who styles himself a
 lover of Truth) so largely shews ’twould be their honour to
 do it, and that the contrary is from their own *stubborness*;
 for he says, “ ’Tis not defensible in any to say, I have been
 “ long in that mind, and therefore determine to continue in
 “ it:” But that this arises “ from having men’s persons and
 “ judgments in admiration: From meer numbers bearing
 “ company; (and that this is unjustifiable) because we know
 “ the dissuasive from *following a multitude to do evil*. Others
 “ would fain extenuate the matter by *doubting*; but doubt-
 “ ing in so plain a case is incapable of assisting them. Of
 “ doubts some are dangerous, some safe, &c. Some may be
 “ for defending themselves from owning their mistake, by
 “ the help of that maxim of the law of nature, *nemo tenetur*
 “ *accusare seipsum*, no one is obliged to accuse himself, but
 “ &c. The long indisposition of prejudice is a general obsta-
 “ cle

“ cle to what I have been recommending. Conviction
 “ would as certainly follow from evidence as light and sight
 “ from the sun, if something did not unfortunately inter-
 “ cept : The habit of contradicting, suspecting, and disbe-
 “ lieving one another, prodigiously distorts the right appre-
 “ hension of things, as a grosser medium reflects that crook-
 “ ed which is strait. Thus a slight shew of probability, se-
 “ conded by a strong prejudicate opinion, has a greater
 “ power upon the mind, than the clearest demonstration
 “ against it. — Every one indeed has the liberty to remain
 “ still in the vexation of confused error, but no other reason
 “ for it. And if they will abuse their liberty at that un-
 “ conscionable rate, the misfortune heightens into folly,
 “ their inadvertency grows wilful and settles in downright
 “ obstinacy.” Let me cite one passage more which is at
 the beginning of this head of reasoning, and then dismiss
 this author.

In p. 43, 44. He says, “ It is amply allow’d above, that
 “ mistake and inadvertency are incident to otherwise great
 “ and good people : But then the infirmity changes into a
 “ wilful sin, when we have not the virtue to own and for-
 “ sake it, as soon as perceived ; to persevere immoveably
 “ notwithstanding, out of a sham pretence of constancy, or
 “ other faulty motives, is to be noted for perverseness and
 “ invincible *stubbornness*, we have read, is as odious to God
 “ as *iniquity and idolatry*, 1 Sam. xv. 23. If any could with
 “ truth alledge they are absolutely *married* to their opinion,
 “ they might with greater patience bear the inconveniences
 “ they have brought themselves under, rather than acknow-
 “ ledge the error of their choice ; as ’tis very usual with
 “ those who have thrown away themselves in marriage,
 “ against the advice of their friends, to put the best face
 “ upon the matter, after they found themselves deceived,
 “ sooner than confess the wrong judgment they made. But
 “ to what purpose should any of us remain wedded to our
 “ own trouble and mistake, sin and vexation ? When we
 “ may be so honourably divorced (could one single D. D.
 “ possibly marry so many ?) The divorce is as chaste and
 “ virtuous as between a sinner and his sin ; conscience, in-
 “ terest, happiness, all approve of it, all require it, they all
 “ wonder you live so long together. What makes heresy
 “ so bad a thing as it is, but *pertinacy* ? As when consider-
 “ able error refuses to be subdued by sufficient clear light,
 “ or demonstrative divine authority, continuing to strength-

“ en and confirm itself through obstinacy and excessive
 “ fondness, or other base reasons, the *innocency* of error van-
 “ nishes away, and the *guiltiness* of it remains. The fault
 “ passes from the understanding to the will, where it en-
 “ trenches itself, like a stubborn offender who scorns to
 “ yield, resolves upon a desperate defence, knowing that
 “ fortrefs to be inexpugnable.

“ What excuse or extenuation then have they to justify
 “ and support themselves for continuing still in a detected
 “ inadvertency ? Not the supposed reputation of steddiness ;
 “ that is wholly taken from them ; they can’t so much as
 “ once more defend themselves behind that wall, it is level-
 “ led to the ground : The strong hold is blown up ; if that
 “ has been the main *body of reserve*, ’tis utterly put to
 “ flight.”

And now, brethren, permit me to deal ingenuously with
 you : I think I have a right to apply the above citations to
 the present case, having been, as I said, fully convinced that
 I am in the right now, though I freely acknowledge, I was
 once wrong : Nor do I conceive I do by this weaken the
 arguments or reasons which I have all along had for a se-
 paration from the *corruptions* of the C. of E. (in which you
 see I abide constant) but that hereby I do rather strengthen
 them, being firm to that general command and invitation,
 (2 Cor. vi. 17.) *Wherefore come out from among them, &c.*
 On which Mr. Burkitt himself (though he condemns the
 dissenters separation) says, “ That God expects and requires
 “ his saints should make a separation from all uncleanness,
 “ but especially from the uncleanness of idolatry. God ex-
 “ pects our separation from all unclean courses, from all un-
 “ clean company, from the presence and appearance of all
 “ uncleanness, from communion with *idolatrous churches*,
 “ and from communicating with what is *sinful* in the *truest*
 “ *churches* of Christ upon earth.”

The apostle also, you know, saith, (1 Thes. v. 22. *Abstain
 from all appearance of evil* ? And will any be so bold as to
 say, there is not so much as the appearance of evil in all this ?
 Whatever it may be to others ’tis certainly evil to him that
 does it against his own conscience ; and we must as much
 comply, at least to doubtful ceremonies in this, as in any
 other part of their worship. There are some, I believe, ho-
 nest and good christians, who even scruple the being unco-
 vered, not only in the publick places, but even in their own
 assemblies in the time of their hearing the word preached ;

now

now for any of these, however, to question the justice or necessity of the alteration, which (on so good grounds) I do hereby propound to them, I think, would be very preposterous and strange. But I must leave them all to their own master, hoping however they will not refuse wholesome instruction : But whether they will or not, I shall now have the testimony of my own conscience, that I have endeavoured (Col. i. 28.) to *warn and to teach every man in all wisdom*, that (if possible, as much as in me lieth,) I might *present every man perfect in CHRIST JESUS*.

We find in church history (Du Pin, vol. 4. c. 6.) that when *Luther* and his companions broke off from popery, and 'twas required of him to retract his *heresy*, as they called it, *they could not in the least gain upon him* ; for *he would neither retract, nor acknowledge any other judge than the word of God*. And 'tis said, “ While *Luther* was shut up in the castle, which he called his hermitage and isle of *Patmos*, from whence he wrote to his friends, and wrote several books ; *Carolsbad*, carrying things farther than his master, endeavoured to have images removed out of the churches, to abolish auricular confession, the precept of abstaining from meats, the invocation of saints, and private mass, to allow monks to go out of their monasteries, and not to keep their vows any longer, and to allow priests to marry. — A doctrine so favourable as this was to the natural inclinations of men, soon found many partizans ; abundance of religious left their cloisters, and a great number of priests were married : *Carolsbad* was one of the first that gave the example.” And 'tis afterwards said of *Luther* himself, that “ He exhorted the priests and monks to marry, and set them the example himself, by marrying *Catherine de Borea*, one of the nine nuns that *Leonard Coppen*, a burges of *Tergaw*, had taken out of the nunnery of *Nimptchen*, and brought to *Wirtemberg*.”

I have thought this brief history of the *rise* of the *reformation* would not be unacceptable, but if attended to, might be of a good use, and therefore I have inserted it. And if 'tis allowed to be good in the cases abovementioned, 'twill also justify my endeavours for a reformation in this one particular case concerning the *manner* of marriages, that they may be performed agreeable to the mind and will of God.

Should I myself do as *Luther* did, set you the example, you would not, I hope, blame me for it ; and the rather because

cause if I should, I shall, I hope, be an example to you, not only in the *manner* of marriage, but also in the choice of a *help meet*, even such an one as providence allots. My choice would willingly be one of a noble family; but I don't mean one rich or honourable by birth, but one whose ancestors and family have been remarkable for religion and virtue. Not that I would have it supposed that I make this the criterion of a prudent choice, nor that I would despise riches, or any thing of that kind that may, or might be an advantage and comfort in life; but I think, there's something greater, and much more valuable than this. I remember the case of *Ruth*, and how commendably *Booz* speaks of her, *Ruth* ii. 11, 12.

There is, in my thoughts, no more requisite, or of *great* necessity in this case, than that a man should make choice of a christian and a virtuous woman, for there can be no prospect of content or comfort with any other: But such an one, *such a prudent and virtuous wife is of the Lord*, whatever her family or ancestors were, or her own condition in the world is, *Pro. xix. 14.* See the most excellent description of her, *Pro. xxxi. 10. &c.*

This, I judge, should be the great rule of a man's choice, but if after all care is taken with the best advice of friends and relatives, and especially (which is beyond all the rest, and highly to be recommended in this so weighty a case) earnest prayer to God for his direction in it: But, I say, if after all this care is taken, we should happen to make a mistake herein, it will still become the parties (*man or woman*) to be content with the choice they have made, for when any one takes a wife he takes her *to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer*, and to maintain her, &c. *in sickness and in health*, till death parts them: And *he may not* (without some urgent necessity and cause that may be justified both by the law of God and man) *put her away all his days.*

I hope my friends will not now shut their eyes, nor stop their ears against this cordial counsel and advice; but whether they will *hear or forbear*, I leave it with them, rejoicing in this that I shall now have the testimony of a good conscience in this, as well as in other cases, and be *clear of the blood of all men*; and if the present generation will not regard it, and our friends now shall not have the courage to confess CHRIST in this thing, yet it may perhaps take place in another

another generation, and they may *recover* and *stand fast* in the *liberty wherewith Christ has made us free*.

And thus I leave it to the blessing of the Almighty, as an appeal to the churches, and for a testimony to the world, and remain yours in Christ Jesus.

N. B. The author's apology for this postscript is; he had propounded to his people at a proper season the drawing up of a letter for the assembly only for their approbation or advice in this case, but could not prevail so far with them, therefore he calmly let it drop, when he found the arguments he urged had no weight with them, not in the least thinking then, either to disturb the church, or to print any thing concerning it; but there happening afterwards something else to concur, which seemed to make a postscript needful, therefore the author desired the above to be inserted."

ERRATA.

Page 19. l. 2. read *labourer*. P. 24. In the margin at bottom for p. 40, 43. read *p. 16, 17*. P. 47. l. 29. read *could*. P. 64. l. 12. for *we*, read *be*. Also l. 15, or 16, dele *the*. p. 65. l. 43. dele *that*. p. 77. l. 26. for *accept*, read *expect*. p. 82. l. 15. for *passions*, read *persuasions*. p. 84. l. 21. read *contradictions*. p. 87. l. 36. for *apostles*, read *apostle*. p. 94. l. 35. for *that the great numbers*, read *that though great numbers*. p. 101. l. 7. dele *enough*. [but let the word stand in the line before.] All other literal mistakes the reader is desired to amend or pardon.

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